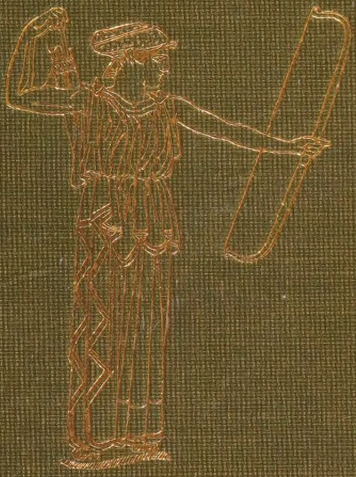

Ina Kelley

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VOL. III

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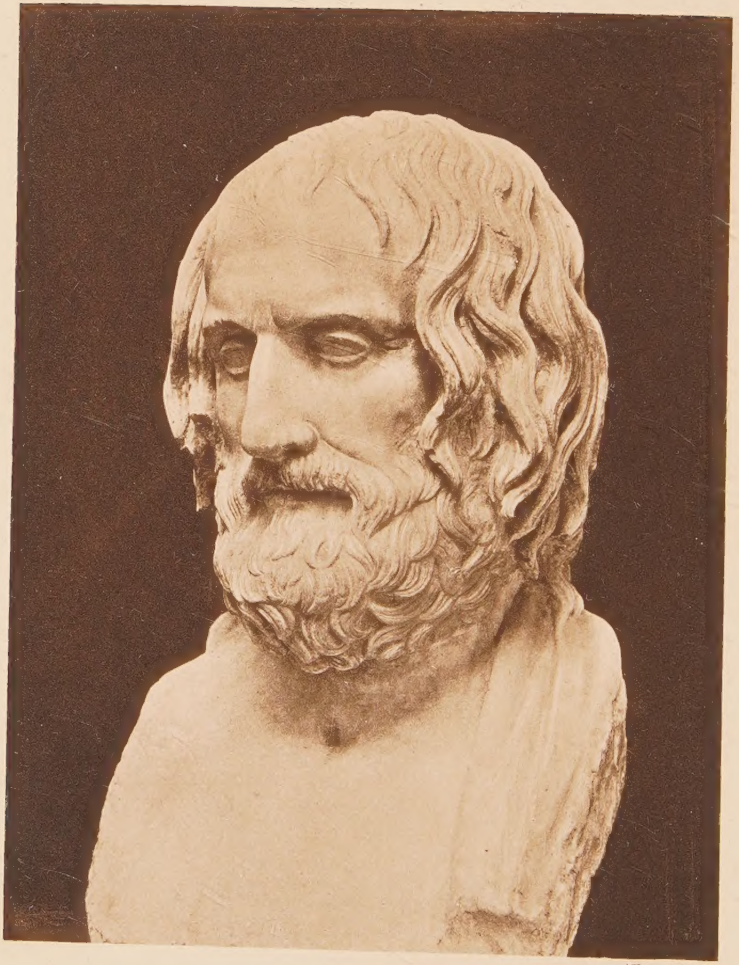

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EURIPIDES.

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH RHYMING VERSE BY

GILBERT MURRAY, M.A., LL.D

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW; FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE object of this book is in the first place to put before English readers a translation of some very beautiful poetry, and in the second place to give some description of a remarkable artist and thinker. This double purpose explains the somewhat unusual composition of the volume.

I have taken first two plays of Euripides—the *Hippolytus* and *The Bacchae*—chosen partly for their beauty, partly because they are very characteristic of their author. Different as they are, both are peculiarly imbued with his special atmosphere, an atmosphere of creativeness steeped in critical meditation, of Fiction that exists for the sake of Truth—sometimes to express Truth, sometimes consciously to fly from Truth, but always in some way intimately conditioned by the search for it.

Next, I have selected the chief ancient criticism of Euripides, a satire penetrating, brilliant, and, though preposterously unfair, still exceedingly helpful to any student who

does not choose to put himself at its mercy. To some readers there may appear to be something irreverent in allowing two noble tragedies to be so closely followed by a hostile burlesque. I personally feel a kind of satisfaction in the juxtaposition. What is said of Euripides in *The Frogs*, so far as it is serious, is after all part of the truth, and a part not to be ignored. And to me the figure of the great philosopher and poet seems even more august and more undoubtedly beautiful when I have heard and digested what his enemies said of him. Euripides would be the last man to wish for an admiration based on the suppression of evidence. My only regret is for the necessity of inserting the irrelevant and rather poor fooling of the first few scenes of *The Frogs*.

Lastly, I have added an Appendix which, I venture to hope, may be of some interest both to students and to other readers. In trying to understand the work of Euripides, one ought certainly to take some account of the many plays—fifty-six for certain—which are "lost" or represented by "fragments," that is, by quotations or descriptions or allusions in late authors. I have tried, following chiefly Welcker (*Die Griechischen Tragödien*) and Hartung (*Euripides Restitutus*), to reconstruct the main lines of many of these lost dramas,

and have translated a few typical fragments of each. It seemed most convenient to choose for this purpose those plays which happen to be referred to in *The Frogs*.

On points of ancient religion I have had the great advantage of frequent consultation with Miss J. E. Harrison. As to questions of text, I have in the *Hippolytus* followed my own critical edition published by the Clarendon Press; in *The Bacchae* I have acted on the same plan, though the volume containing that play has not yet been published. In places where my own mind was not yet made up I have nearly always followed Ewald Bruhn. In *The Frogs* I used Van Leeuwen's edition, but have been led by the Oxford editors, Hall and Geldart, to reconsider several passages. In the fragments I have made no emendations, but followed either Nauck or some MS Once or twice, for convenience' sake, I have joined two fragments together.

As to the method of this translation, which may, I fear, seem odd and even illegitimate to many scholars, a word of explanation is necessary. My aim has been to build up something as like the original as I possibly could, in form and in what one calls "spirit." To do this, the first thing needed was a work of painstaking scholarship, a work in which there

should be no neglect of the letter in an attempt to snatch at the spirit, but, on the contrary, close study of the letter and careful tracking of the spirit by means of its subtleties. This to the best of my power I tried to accomplish many years ago in prose translations, very full and often verging towards commentary or paraphrase, which I used as the basis of lectures in my classes at the University of Glasgow. Such a translation, so far as it was correct, would give what one loosely calls the "meaning" of the original; but it would be prose, stilted and long-winded prose, and the original is gleaming poetry. The remaining task, then —so great a task that I shrink somewhat from even admitting that I have contemplated it— was that of a poet. Of course, in such an attempt, the attempt of an ordinary man of letters to reproduce the essential poetry of a great far-off poet, failure is certain, and failure generally more profound than the translator himself realises. But of that more presently. I am bound to confess that, the groundwork of careful translation once laid, I have thought no more about anything but the poetry. I have often laboured long to express a slight shade of meaning or of beauty which I felt lurking in some particular word or cadence; and, on the other hand, I have often changed

metaphors, altered the shapes of sentences, and the like. On one occasion (*Hip.* 385) I have even omitted a line and a half, because, though apparently needed in the Greek to make clear a rather difficult thought, they were not needed in English, where the thought in question was quite familiar. I have added, of course by conjecture, a few stage directions.

There are pitfalls innumerable in this course. Who is to say what the "spirit" of Euripides really was? My version of it will differ greatly from that of many men of far greater learning. Some good scholars, again (and innumerable bad ones!), have a rigidly fixed conception of what is in the limits of "ancient thought," and what is "Christian" or "modern," and may consider that I ought to have shut my ears and refused to listen when Euripides seemed to transgress these limits. It may also be felt that I have walked somewhat rashly in places of uncertain text or meaning, and consequently made some definite mistranslations where a more cautious scholar would have avoided committing himself. My answer is that, if in a matter of scholarship it is well to be "safe" or even to "hedge," in a matter of Art any such cowardice is fatal. I have in my own mind a fairly clear conception of what I take to be the

"spirit" of Euripides, and I have kept my hands very free in trying to get near it. Some of the means employed are indirect and even paradoxical. Euripides has, of course, no rhyme; yet a rhymed version seems to me, after many experiments, to produce the effect of his style much more nearly than blank verse. I have often used more elaborate diction than he, because I found that, Greek being a very simple and austere language and modern English an ornate one, a direct translation produced an effect of baldness which was quite unlike the original.

A strictly literal translation has the advantage that it can be definitely attacked and defended on scientific grounds. It has a possibility of being "right." And a translation like mine cannot be "right." Its failure, indeed, must, as I said above, be more profound than the writer realises. First, because a man generally does not see his own mistakes or realise his own interrupting mannerisms; and, secondly, because a translator cannot help seeing his own work through the medium of that greater thing which he studies and loves. The light of the original shines through it, and the music of the original echoes round it. Creech's versions of Horace and Theocritus may possess as little "art of speech" as their

famous critic implies—I speak without prejudice, never having seen them. They may be to us unreadable; bad verse in themselves, and full of Creech's tiresome personality, the Horace no Horace of ours, and the Theocritus utterly unlike Theocritus. But to Creech himself, how different it all was! He did not know how bad his lines were. He did not feel any veil of intervening Creech. To him the Theocritus was not Creech, but pure Theocritus, or, if not quite that, at least something haunted by all the magic of Theocritus. When he read his baldest lines his voice, no doubt, trembled with emotion. But it was the original that caused the emotion. The original was always there present to him in a kind of symbol, its beauty perhaps even increased by that idealisation and endearment which naturally attend the long and loving service of one human mind to another.

G. M.

CHURT, SURREY,
Oct. 30, 1902.

Alcestis

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

THE BACCHAE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN CURRENTS OF THOUGHT IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

Of the two dramas that make up the main part of this volume, the *Hippolytus* can be left to speak for itself. Its two thousand five hundred years have left little mark upon it. It has something of the stateliness of age, no doubt, but none of the staleness or lack of sympathy. With all the severe lines of its beauty, it is tender, subtle, quick with human feeling. Even its religious conceptions, if we will but take them simply, forgetting the false mythology we have learned from handbooks, are easily understood and full of truth. One of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of love

tragedies, it deals with a theme that might easily be made ugly. It is made ugly by later writers, especially by the commentators whom we can see always at work from the times of the ancient scholia down to our own days. Even Racine, who wished to be kind to his Phèdre, has let her suffer by contact with certain deadly and misleading suggestions. But the Phaedra of Euripides was quite another woman, and the quality of her love, apart from its circumstances, is entirely fragrant and clear. The *Hippolytus*, like most works that come from a strong personality, has its mannerisms and, no doubt, its flaws. But in the main it is a singularly satisfying and complete work of art, a thing of beauty, to contemplate and give thanks for, surrounded by an atmosphere of haunting purity.

If we turn to *The Bacchae*, we find a curious difference. As an effort of genius it is perhaps greater than the *Hippolytus*, at any rate more unusual and rare in quality. But it is unsatisfying, inhuman. There is an impression of coldness and even of prolixity amid its amazing thrill, a strange unearthliness, something that bewilders. Most readers, I believe, tend to ask what it means, and to feel, by implication, that it means something.

Now this problem, what *The Bacchae* means and how Euripides came to write it, is not

only of real interest in itself; it is also, I think, of importance with regard to certain movements in fifth-century Athens, and certain currents of thought in later Greek philosophy.

The remark has been made, that, if Aristotle could have seen through some magic glass the course of human development and decay for the thousand years following his death, the disappointment would have broken his heart. A disappointment of the same sort, but more sharp and stinging, inasmuch as men's hopes were both higher and cruder, did, as a matter of fact, break the hearts of many men two or three generations earlier. It is the reflection of that disappointment on the work of Euripides, the first hopefulness, the embitterment, the despair, followed at last by a final half-prophetic vision of the truths or possibilities beyond that despair, that will, I think, supply us with an explanation of a large part of *The Bacchae*, and with a clue to a great deal of the poet's other work.

There has been, perhaps, no period in the world's history, not even the openings of the French Revolution, when the prospects of the human race can have appeared so brilliant as they did to the highest minds of Eastern Greece about the years 470–445 B.C. To us, looking critically back upon that time, it is

as though the tree of human life had burst suddenly into flower, into that exquisite and short-lived bloom which seems so disturbing among the ordinary processes of historical growth. One wonders how it must have felt to the men who lived in it. We have but little direct testimony. There is the tone of solemn exaltation that pervades most of Aeschylus, the high confidence of the *Persae*, the *Prometheus*, the *Eumenides*. There is the harassed and half-reluctant splendour of certain parts of Pindar, like the Dithyramb to Athens and the fourth Nemean Ode. But in the main the men of that day were too busy, one would fain think too happy, to write books.

There is an interesting witness, however, of a rather younger generation. Herodotus finished his Histories when the glory was already gone, and the future seemed about equally balanced between good and evil. But he had lived as a boy in the great time. And the peculiar charm of his work often seems to lie mainly in a certain strong and kindly joyousness, persistent even amid his most horrifying stories, which must be the spirit of the first Athenian Confederation not yet strangled by the spirit of the Peloponnesian war.

What was the object of this enthusiasm, the ground of this high hopefulness? It would, of course, take us far beyond our limits to

attempt any full answer to such a question. But for one thing, there was the extraordinary swiftness of the advances made; and, for another, there was a circumstance that has rarely been repeated in history—the fact that all the different advances appeared to help one another. The ideals of freedom, law, and progress; of truth and beauty, of knowledge and virtue, of humanity and religion; high things, the conflicts between which have caused most of the disruptions and despondencies of human societies, seemed for a generation or two at this time to lie all in the same direction. And in that direction, on the whole, a great part of Greece was with extraordinary swiftness moving. Of course, there were backwaters and reactionary forces. There was Sparta and even Aetolia; Pythagoras and the Oracle at Delphi. But in the main, all good things went hand in hand. The poets and the men of science, the moral teachers and the hardy speculators, the great traders and the political reformers—all found their centre of life and aspiration in the same 'School of Hellas,' Athens. The final seal of success was set upon the movement by the defeat of the Persian invasion and the formation of the Athenian League. The higher hopes and ideals had clashed against

[1] A magnificent text for such a discussion would be found in the great lyric on the Rise of Man in Sophocles' *Antigone* (v. 332 ff.).

the lower under conditions in which the victory of the lower seemed beforehand certain; and somehow, miraculously, ununderstandably, that which was high had shown that it was also strong. Athens stood out as the chief power of the Mediterranean.

Let us recall briefly a few well-known passages of Herodotus to illustrate the tone of the time.

Athens represented Hellenism (Hdt. i. 60). "The Greek race was distinguished of old from the barbarian as nimbler of intellect and further removed from primitive savagery (or stupidity). . . . And of all Greeks the Athenians were counted the first for wisdom."

She represented the triumph of Democracy (Hdt. v. 78). "So Athens grew. It is clear not in one thing alone, but wherever you test it, what a good thing is equality among men. Even in war, Athens, when under the tyrants, was no better than her neighbours; when freed from the tyrants, she was far the first of all."

And Democracy was at this time a thing which stirred enthusiasm. A speaker says in Herodotus (iii. 80): "A tyrant disturbs ancient laws, violates women, kills men without trial. But a people ruling—first, the very name of it is so beautiful, Isonomiê (Equality in law); and, secondly, a people does none of these things."

"The very name of it is so beautiful!" It was some twenty-five years later that an Athenian statesman, of moderate or rather popular antecedents, said in a speech at Sparta (Thuc. vi. 89): "Of course, all sensible men know what Democracy is, and I better than most, having suffered; but there is nothing new to be said about acknowledged insanity!"

That, however, is looking ahead. We must note that this Democracy, this Freedom, represented by Greece, and especially by Athens, was always the Rule of Law. There is a story told by Aeschylus of the Athenians, by Herodotus of the Spartans, contrasting either with the barbarians and their lawless absolute monarchies. Xerxes, learning the small numbers of his Greek adversaries, asks, "How can they possibly stand against us, especially when, as you tell me, they are all free, and there is no one to compel them?" And the Spartan Demarâtus answers (Hdt. vii. 104): "Free are they, O King, yet not free to do everything; for there is a master over them, even Law, whom they fear more than thy servants fear thee. At least they obey whatever he commands, and his voice is always the same." In Aeschylus (*Persae*, 241 *seqq.*) the speakers present are both Persians, so the point

about Law cannot be explained. It is left a mystery, how and why the free Greeks face their death.

It would be easy to assemble many passages to show that Athens represented freedom (*e.g.* Hdt. viii. 142) and the enfranchisement of the oppressed; but what is even more characteristic than the insistence on Freedom is the insistence on Aretê, Virtue—the demand made upon each Greek, and especially each Athenian, to be a better man than the ordinary. It comes out markedly from a quarter where we should scarcely expect it. Herodotus gives an abstract of the words spoken by the much-maligned Themistocles before the battle of Salamis—a brief, grudging résumé of a speech so celebrated that it could not in decency be entirely passed over (Hdt. viii. 83): "The argument of it was that in all things that are possible to man's nature and situation, there is always a higher and a lower;" and that *they* must stand for the higher. We should have liked to hear more of that speech. It certainly achieved its end.

There was insistence on Aretê in another sense, the sense of generosity and kindliness. A true Athenian must know how to give way. When the various states were contending for the leadership before the battle of Artemisium,

the Athenians, contributing much the largest and finest fighting force, "thought," we are told (Hdt. viii. 3), "that the great thing was that Greece should be saved, and gave up their claims." In the similar dispute for the post of honour and danger before the battle of Plataea, the Athenians did plead their cause, and easily won it (Hdt. ix. 27). But we may notice not only the moderate and disciplined spirit in which they promise to abide by Sparta's decision, and to show no resentment if their claim is rejected, but also the grounds upon which they claim honour—beyond certain obvious points, such as the size of their contingent. Their claims are that in recent years they alone have met the Persians single-handed on behalf of all Greece; that in old times it was they who gave refuge to the Children of Heracles when hunted through Greece by the overmastering tyrant, Eurystheus; it was they who championed the wives and mothers of the Argives slain at Thebes, and made war upon that conquering power to prevent wrong-doing against the helpless dead.

These passages, which could easily be reinforced by a score of others, illustrate, not of course what Athens as a matter of hard fact *was*—no state has ever been one compact mass of noble qualities—but the kind of ideal that

Athens in her own mind had formed of herself. They help us to see what she appeared to the imaginations of Aeschylus and young Euripides, and that 'Band of Lovers' which Pericles gathered to adore his Princess of Cities. She represented Freedom and Law, Hellenism and Intellect, Humanity, Chivalry, the championship of the helpless and oppressed.

Did Euripides feel all this? one may ask. The answer to that doubt is best to be found, perhaps, in the two plays which he wrote upon the two traditional feats of generosity mentioned above—the reception of the Children of Heracles, and the championing of the Argive Suppliants. The former is unfortunately mutilated, and perhaps interpolated as well, so the *Suppliants* will suit our purpose best. It is, I think, an early play rewritten at the time of the Peace of Nicias (B.C. 421), about the beginning of the poet's middle period,[1] a poor play in many respects, youthful, obvious, and crude, but all aflame with this chivalrous and confident spirit.

The situation is as follows: Adrastus, King of Argos, has led the ill-fated expedition of the

[1] Some critics consider that it was first written at this time. If so, we must attribute the apparent marks of earliness to deliberate archaism. There is no doubt that the reception of Suppliants was a very old stage subject, and had acquired a certain traditional stiffness of form, seen at its acme in the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus.

Seven Chieftains against Thebes, and been utterly defeated. The Thebans have brutally refused to allow the Argives to bury their dead. The bodies are lying upon the field. Adrastus, accompanied by the mothers and wives of the slain chieftains, has come to Attica, and appealed to Theseus for intercession. That hero, like his son Demophon in *The Children of Heracles*, like his ancestor Cecrops in certain older poetry, is a sort of personification of Athens.

He explains that he always disapproved of Adrastus's expedition; that he can take no responsibility, and certainly not risk a war on the Argives' account.

He is turning away when one of the bereaved women, lifting her suppliant wreaths and branches, cries out to him:—

> What is this thing thou doest? Wilt despise
> All these, and cast us from thee beggar-wise,
> Grey women, with not one thing of all we crave?
> Nay, the wild beast for refuge hath his cave,
> The slave God's altar; surely in the deep
> Of fortune City may call to City, and creep,
> A wounded thing, to shelter.

Observe the conception of the duty of one state to protect and help another.—Theseus is still obdurate. He has responsibilities. The recklessness of Athens in foreign policy has

become a reproach. At last Aethra, his mother, can keep silence no more. Can he really allow such things to be done? Can Athens really put considerations of prudence before generosity and religion?

> Thou shalt not suffer it, thou being my child!
> Thou hast heard men scorn thy city, call her wild
> Of counsel, mad; thou hast seen the fire of morn
> Flash from her eyes in answer to their scorn!
> Come toil on toil, 'tis this that makes her grand,
> Peril on peril! And common states that stand
> In caution, twilight cities, dimly wise—
> Ye know them; for no light is in their eyes!
> Go forth, my son, and help.—My fear is fled
> Now. Women in sorrow call thee and men dead!

To help the helpless was a necessary part of what we call chivalry, what the Greeks called religion. Theseus agrees to consult the people on the matter. Meantime there arrives a Theban herald, asking arrogantly, "Who is Master of the land?" Theseus, although a king, is too thorough a personification of democratic Athens to let such an expression pass—

> Nay, peace, Sir Stranger! Ill hast thou begun,
> Seeking a Master here. No will of one
> Holdeth this land; it is a city and free.
> The whole folk year by year, in parity
> Of service, is our King. Nor yet to gold
> Give we high seats, but in one honour hold
> The poor man and the rich.

The herald replies that he is delighted to hear that Athens has such a silly constitution, and warns Theseus not to interfere with Thebes for the sake of a beaten cause. Eventually Theseus gives his ultimatum :—

> Let the slain be given
> To us, who seek to obey the will of Heaven.
> Else, know for sure, I come to seek these dead
> Myself, for burial.—It shall not be said
> An ancient ordinance of God, that cried
> To Athens and her King, was cast aside!

A clear issue comes in the conversation that follows :—

> HERALD.
> Art thou so strong? Wilt stand against all Greece?
>
> THESEUS.
> Against all tyrants! With the rest be peace.
>
> HERALD.
> She takes too much upon her, this thy state!
>
> THESEUS.
> Takes, aye, and bears it; therefore is she great!

We know that spirit elsewhere in the history of the world. How delightful it is, and green and fresh and thrilling; and how often it has paid in blood and ashes the penalty of dreaming and of *τὸ μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν*.

There is one other small point that calls for notice before we leave this curious play. Theseus represents not only chivalry and

freedom and law, but also a certain delicacy of feeling. He is the civilised man as contrasted with the less civilised. It was a custom in many parts of Greece to make the very most of mourning and burial rites, to feel the wounds of the slain, and vow vengeance with wild outbursts of grief. Athenian feeling disapproved of this.

THESEUS.

This task
Is mine. Advance the burden of the dead!
[*The attendants bring forward the bodies.*

ADRASTUS.

Up, ye sad mothers, where your sons are laid!

THESEUS.

Nay, call them not, Adrastus.

ADRASTUS.

That were strange!
Shall they not touch their children's wounds?

THESEUS.

The change
In that dead flesh would torture them.

ADRASTUS.

'Tis pain
Alway, to count the gashes of the slain.

THESEUS.

And wouldst thou add pain to the pain of these?

ADRASTUS (*after a pause*).

So be it!—Ye women, wait in your degrees:
Theseus says well.

This particular trait, this civilisation or delicacy of feeling, is wonderfully illustrated in a much finer drama, the *Heracles*. The hero of that tragedy, the rudely noble Dorian —or perhaps Pelasgian—chief, has in a fit of madness killed his own children. In the scene to be cited he has recovered his senses and is sitting dumb and motionless, veiled by his mantle. He is, by all ordinary notions, accursed. The sight of his face will pollute the sun. A touch from him or even a spoken word will spread the curse, the contagion of his horrible blood-stainedness, to another. To him comes his old comrade Theseus (*Heracles*, 1214 ff.):—

THESEUS.

O thou that sittest in the shadow of Death,
Unveil thy brow! 'Tis a friend summoneth,
And never darkness bore so black a cloud
In all this world, as from mine eyes could shroud
The wreck of thee. . . . What wouldst thou with that arm
That shakes, and shows me blood? Dost fear to harm
Me with thy words' contagion? Have no fear;
What is it if I suffer with thee here?
I have rejoiced in many lands.—Back now
To when the Dead had hold of me, and how
Thou camest conquering! Can that joy grow old,
Or friends once linked in sunshine, when the cold
Storm falleth, not together meet the sea?—
Oh, rise, and bare thy brow, and turn to me
Thine eyes! A brave man faces his own fall
And takes it to him, as God sends withal.

HERACLES.

Theseus, thou seest my children?

THESEUS.

Surely I see
All, and I knew it ere I came to thee.

HERACLES.

Oh, why hast bared to the Sun this head of mine?

THESEUS.

How can thy human sin stain things divine?

HERACLES.

Leave me! I am all blood. The curse thereof
Crawls. . . .

THESEUS.

No curse cometh between love and love!

HERACLES.

I thank thee. . . . Yes; I served thee long ago.

Heracles is calmed and his self-respect partially restored. But he still cannot bear to live. Notice the attitude of Theseus towards his suicide — an attitude more striking in ancient literature than it would be in modern.

HERACLES.

Therefore is all made ready for my death.

THESEUS.

Thinkest thou God feareth what thy fury saith?

HERACLES (*rising*).

Oh, God is hard; and I hard against God!

THESEUS.

What wilt thou? And whither on thine angry road?

HERACLES.

Back to the darkness whence my race began!

THESEUS.

These be the words of any common man!

HERACLES (*taken aback*).

Aye, thou art scathless. Chide me at thine ease!

THESEUS.

Is this He of the Labours, Heracles?

HERACLES.

Of none like this, if measure there is in pain!

THESEUS.

The Helper of the World, the Friend of Man?

HERACLES (*with a movement*).

Crushed by Her hate! How can the past assuage
This horror. . . .

THESEUS.

Thou shalt not perish in thy rage!
Greece will not suffer it.

The passage illustrates not only nobility of feeling in Theseus, but, in a way very characteristic of Euripides, the fact that this nobility is based on religious reflection, on genuinely 'free' thought. Theseus dares the contagion for the sake of his friendship. He also does not believe in the contagion. He does not

really think for a moment that he will become guilty of a crime because he has touched some one who committed it. He is in every sense, as Herodotus puts it, "further removed from primitive savagery."

But this play also shows, and it is probably the very last of Euripides' plays which does show it, a strong serenity of mind. The loss of this serenity is one of the most significant marks of the later plays of Euripides as contrasted with the earlier. We must not overstate the antithesis. There was always in Euripides a vein of tonic bitterness, a hint of satire or criticism, a questioning of established things. It is markedly present even in the *Alcestis*, in the scene where Admêtus is denounced by his old father; it is present in a graver form in the *Hippolytus*. Yet the general impression produced by those two plays when compared with, for instance, the *Electra* and the *Troades*, is undoubtedly one of serenity as against fever, beauty as against horror. And the same will nearly always hold for the comparison of any of his early plays with any later one. Of course not quite always. If we take the *Troades*, in the year 415, as marking the turning-point, we shall find the *Hecuba* very bitter among the early plays, the *Helena* bright and light-hearted, though a little harsh,

among the later. This is only natural. There is always something fitful and irregular in the gathering of clouds, however persistent.

There is one cloud even in the *Suppliants*, possibly a mark of the later retouching of that play. The Theban herald is an unsympathetic character, whose business is to say hard, sinister things, and be confuted by Theseus. These unsympathetic heralds are common stage characters. They stalk in with insulting messages and 'tyrannical' sentiments, are surrounded by howling indignation from the virtuous populace, stand their ground motionless, defying any one to touch their sacred persons, and go off with a scornful menace. But this particular herald has some lines put in his mouth which nobody confutes, and which are rather too strongly expressed for the situation.

Theseus is prepared for his chivalrous war, and the people clamour for it. The herald says (v. 484):—

> Oh, it were well
> The death men shout for could stand visible
> Above the urns! And never Greece had reeled
> Blood-mad to ruin o'er many a stricken field.
> Great Heaven, set both out plain and all can tell
> The False word from the True, and Ill from Well,
> And how much Peace is better! Dear is Peace
> To every Muse; she walks her ways and sees

> No haunting Spirit of Judgment. Glad is she
> With noise of happy children, running free
> With corn and oil. And we, so vile we are,
> Forget, and cast her off, and call for War,
> City on city, man on man, to break
> Weak things to obey us for our greatness' sake!

If it is true that the *Suppliants* was rewritten, that must be one of the later passages. Athens had had ten years of bitter war by the time the lines were actually spoken.

Let us again take a few typical passages from the historians to see the form in which the clouds gathered over Athens.

The first and most obvious will be from that curious chapter in which Herodotus, towards the end of his life, is summing up his conclusions about the Persian war, of which Athens was so indisputably the heroine. He observes (vii. 139): "Here I am compelled by necessity to express an opinion which will be offensive to most of mankind. But I cannot refrain from putting it in the way that I believe to be true. . . . The Athenians in the Persian wars were the saviours of Hellas." By the time that passage was written, apologies were necessary if you wished to say a good word for Athens!

The Athenian League, that great instrument of freedom, had grown into an Empire or

Archê. Various allies had tried to secede and failed; had been conquered and made into subjects. The greater part of Greece was seething with timorous ill-feeling against what they called 'The Tyrant City.' And by the opening of the Peloponnesian war, Athens herself had practically ceased to protest against the name. It is strange to recall such words as, for instance, the Spartans had used in 479, when it was rumoured, falsely, that Athens thought of making terms with Persia (Hdt. viii. 142): "It is intolerable to imagine that Athens should ever be a party to the subjection of any Greek state; always from the earliest times you have been known as the Liberators of Many Men." It is strange to compare those words with the language attributed to Pericles in 430 (Thuc. ii. 63):[1]—

"Do not imagine that you are fighting about a simple issue, the subjection or independence of certain cities. You have an empire to lose, and a danger to face from those whom your imperial rule has made to hate you. And it is impossible for you to resign your power—if at this crisis some timorous and inactive spirits

[1] These speeches were revised as late as 403, and may well be coloured by subsequent experience. But this particular point is one on which Thucydides may be absolutely trusted. He would not attribute the odious sentiments of Cleon to his hero Pericles without cause.

are hankering after righteousness even at that price! For by this time your empire has become a Despotism ('Tyrannis'), a thing which in the opinion of mankind is unjust to acquire, but which at any rate cannot be safely surrendered. The men of whom I was speaking, if they could find followers, would soon ruin the city. If they were to go and found a state of their own, they would soon ruin that!"

It would not be relevant here to appraise this policy of Pericles, to discuss how far events had really made it inevitable, or when the first false step was taken. It would not be just, though to many it will be tempting, to draw immediate and unqualified conclusions about contemporary English politics. Our business, at the moment, is merely to notice the extraordinary change of tone. It comes out even more strongly in a speech made by Cleon, the successor of Pericles, in the debate about the punishment of rebel Mitylênê—a debate remarkable as being the very last in which the side of clemency gained the day (Thuc. iii. 37):—

"I have remarked again and again that a Democracy cannot govern an empire; and never more clearly than now, when I see you regretting your sentence upon the Mitylenaeans. Living without fear and suspicion

among yourselves, you deal with your allies upon the same principle; and you do not realise that whenever you make a concession to them out of pity, or are misled by their specious reports, you are guilty of a weakness dangerous to yourselves, and you receive no gratitude from them. You must remember that your empire is a Despotism exercised over unwilling subjects who are always conspiring against you. They do not obey in return for any kindness you do them; they obey just so far as you show yourselves their masters."

"Do not be misled," he adds a little later (iii. 40), "by the three most deadly enemies of empire, Pity and Eloquent Sentiments and the Generosity of Strength!"

It is a change indeed! A change which the common run of low men, no doubt, accepted as inevitable, or even as a matter of course; which the merely clever and practical men insisted upon, and the more brutal 'patriots' delighted in. They had never loved or understood the old ideals!

Some great political changes can take place without much effect upon men's private lives. But this change was a blight that worked upon daily conduct, upon the roots of character. Thucydides, writing after the end of the war, has two celebrated and terrible chapters

(iii. 82, 83) on that side of the question. Every word of it is apposite to our point; but we may content ourselves with a few sentences here and there.

"In peace and prosperity both states and men," he says, "are free to act upon higher motives. They are not caught up by coils of circumstance which drive them without their own volition. But War, taking away the margin in daily life, is a teacher who educates by violence; and he makes men's characters fit their conditions. . . ."

The later actors in the war "determined to outdo the report of those who had gone before them by the ingenuity of their enterprises and the enormity of their revenges. . . ." The meaning of words, he notices, changed in relation to things. Thoughtfulness, prudence, moderation, generosity were scouted; daring and cunning were prized. "Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. . . ."

"Neither side cared for religion, but both used it with enthusiasm as a pretext for various odious purposes. . . ."

"The cause of all these evils was the lust of empire, originating in avarice and ambition, and the party spirit which is engendered from such circumstances when men settle themselves down to a contest."

"Thus Revolution gave birth to every kind of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble nature was laughed to death and vanished out of the world. An attitude of mistrustful antagonism prevailed everywhere. No power existed to soften it, no cogency of reason, no bond of religion." . . . "Inferior characters succeeded best. The higher kinds of men were too thoughtful, and were swept aside."

Men caught up in coils of circumstance that drive them without their own volition—ingenious enterprises; enormous revenges; mad ambition; mistrust; frantic energy; the abuse of religion; simplicity laughed out of the world: it is a terrible picture, and it is exactly the picture that meets us in the later tragedies of Euripides. Those plays all, as Dr. Verrall has acutely remarked, have an extraordinary air of referring to the present and not the past, of dealing with things that 'matter,' not things made up or dreamed about. And it is in this spirit that they deal with them. Different plays may be despairing like the *Troades*, cynical like the *Ion*, deliberately hateful like the *Electra*, frantic and fierce like the *Orestes;* they are nearly all violent, nearly all misanthropic. Amid all their power and beauty there sounds from time to time

a cry of nerves frayed to the snapping point, a jarring note of fury against something personal to the poet and not always relevant to the play. Their very splendours, the lines that come back most vividly to a reader's mind, consist often in the expression of some vice. There are analyses or self-revelations, like the famous outburst of the usurping Prince Eteoclês in the *Phoenissae* :—

> These words that thou wilt praise
> The Equal and the Just,—in all men's ways
> I have not found them! These be names, not things.
> Mother, I will unveil to thee the springs
> That well within me. I would break the bars
> Of Heaven, and past the risings of the stars
> Climb, aye, or sink beneath dark Earth and Sea,
> To clasp my goddess-bride, my Sovranty!
> This is my good, which never by mine own
> Will shall man touch, save Eteoclês alone!

There are flashes of cruel hate like the first words of old Tyndareus to the doomed and agonised Orestes, whose appearance has been greeted by Menelaus with the words :—

> Who cometh ghastly as the grave? . .
>
> TYNDAREUS.
>
> Ah God,
> The snake! The snake, that drank his mother's blood,
> Doth hiss and flash before the gates, and bow
> The pestilence-ridden glimmer of his brow.
> I sicken at him!—Wilt thou stain thy soul
> With speech, Menelaus, of a thing so foul?

Above all, there is what I will not venture to illustrate, the celebrated Euripidean 'pathos,' that power of insight into the cruelty of suffering; the weakness and sensitiveness of the creatures that rend one another; that piteousness in the badness of things which makes them half lovable. This is the one characteristic of Euripides' world which is not present in that of Thucydides. The grimly reticent historian seldom speaks of human suffering; the tragedian keeps it always before our eyes.

This gradual embitterment and exacerbation of style in Euripides, as shown by the later plays compared with the earlier, is, I believe, generally recognised. I will choose in illustration of it a scene from the *Hecuba*, a tragedy early in date, but in tone and spirit really the first of the late series.[1]

The *Hecuba* deals with the taking of Troy, the great achievement in war of the heroic age of Greece. And the point in it that interests Euripides is, as often, the reverse of the picture —the baseness and, what is worse, the uninterestingness of the conquerors; the monstrous wrongs of the conquered; the moral degradation of

[1] I am the more moved to select this particular scene because I find that the text and punctuation of my edition, which I owe to a remark of Dr. Verrall's, confirmed by a re-examination of the Paris MSS., has caused difficulties to some scholars.

both parties, culminating in the transformation of Hecuba from a grave oriental queen into a kind of she-devil. Among the heroes who took Troy were, as every Athenian knew, the two sons of Theseus. The Athenian public would, of course, insist on their being mentioned. And they are mentioned—once! A young princess is to be cruelly murdered by a vote of the Greek host. One wishes to know what these high Athenians had to say when the villain Odysseus consented to her death. And we are told. "The sons of Theseus, the branches of Athens, made orations contradicting each other"—so like them at their worst!—"but both were in favour of the murder!" Small wonder that Euripides' plays were awarded only four first prizes in fifty years!

In the scene which I select (vv. 795 ff.), the body of Hecuba's one remaining son, Polydôrus, has just been washed up by the sea. He, being very young, had been sent away to the keeping of a Thracian chieftain, an old friend, till the war should be over. And now it proves that the Thracian, as soon as he saw that the Trojan cause wasdefinitely lost, has murdered his charge! Hecuba appeals to her enemy Agamemnon for help to avenge the murder. The "King of Men" is, as usual in Euripides, a poor creature, a brave soldier and kindly enough amid the

havoc he makes, but morally a coward and a sensualist. The scene is outside Agamemnon's tent. Inside the tent is Hecuba's one remaining daughter, Cassandra, a prophetess vowed to virginity or to union only with the God; she is now Agamemnon's concubine!

Observe how the nobler part of the appeal fails, the baser succeeds. Hecuba shows Agamemnon her son's body, and tells how the Thracian slew him:—

> And by a plot
> Slew him; and when he slew him, could he not
> Throw earth upon his bones, if he must be
> A murderer? Cast him naked to the sea?
> O King, I am but one amid thy throng
> Of servants; I am weak, but God is strong,
> God, and that King that standeth over God,
> Law; who makes gods and unmakes, by whose rod
> We live dividing the Unjust from the Just;
> Whom now before thee standing if thou thrust
> Away—if men that murder guests, and tear
> God's house down, meet from thee no vengeance, where
> Is Justice left in the world? Forbid it, thou!
> Have mercy! Dost not *fear* to wrong me now? . . .
> Hate me no more. Stand like an arbiter
> Apart, and count the weight of woes I bear.
> I was a Queen once, now I am thy slave;
> I had children once; but not now. And my grave
> Near; very old, broken and homeless. . . . Stay;
> [*Agamemnon, painfully embarrassed, has moved towards the tent.*
> God help me, whither dost thou shrink away? . . .
> It seems he does not listen! . . .

. . . So, 'tis plain
Now. I must never think of hope again. . . .
Those that are left me are dead; dead all save one;
One lives, a slave, in shame. . . . Ah, I am gone! . . .
The smoke! Troy is on fire! The smoke all round!
[*She swoons. Agamemnon comes back. Her fellow-slaves tend her. . . . She rises again with a sudden thought.*
What? . . . Yes, I might! . . . Oh, what a hollow sound,
Love, here! But I can say it! . . . Let me be! . . .
King, King, there sleepeth side by side with thee
My child, my priestess, whom they call in Troy
Cassandra. Wilt thou pay not for thy joy?
Nothing to her for all the mystery,
And soft words of the dark? Nothing to me
For her? Nay, mark me; look on these dead eyes!
This is her brother; surely thine likewise!
Thou wilt avenge him?

This desperate and horrible appeal stirs him. He is much occupied with Cassandra for the moment. But he is afraid. 'The King of Thrace is an ally of the Greeks, the slain boy was after all an enemy. People will say he is influenced by Cassandra. If it were not for that. . . .' She answers him in words which might stand as a motto over most of the plays of this period—as they might over much of Tolstoi:—

Faugh! There is no man free in all this world!
Slaves of possessions, slaves of fortune, hurled
This way and that. Or else the multitude
Hath hold on him; or laws of stone and wood

> Constrain, and will not let him use the soul
> Within him! . . . So thou durst not? And thine whole
> Thought hangs on what thy herd will say? Nay, then,
> My master, I will set thee free again.

She arranges a plan which shall not implicate him. The Thracian chieftain is allowed to visit her. On the pretence of explaining to him where a treasure is hidden, she entices him and his two children—"it is more prudent to have them present, in case he should die!"—inside the tent of the captive Trojan women. The women make much of the children, and gradually separate them from their father. They show interest in his Thracian javelins and the texture of his cloak, and so form a group round him. At a given signal they cling to him and hold him fast, murder his children before his face, and then tear his eyes out. Agamemnon, who knew that something would happen, but had never expected this, is horrified and impotent. The blinded barbarian comes back on to the stage, crawling, unable to stand. He gropes for the bodies of his children; for some one to help him; for some one to tear and kill. He shrieks like a wild beast, and the horrible scene ends.

We will not go farther into this type of play. More illustrations would, of course, prove nothing. It is the business of a tragedian

to be harrowing. It is a dangerous and a somewhat vulgar course to deduce from a poet's works direct conclusions about his real life; but there is on the one hand the fact of progressive bitterness in Euripides' plays, and, on the other, as we have noticed above, there is the peculiar impression which they make of dealing with living and concrete things. But it is not really anything positive that chiefly illustrates the later tone of Euripides. It is not his denunciations of nearly all the institutions of human society—of the rich, the poor, men, women, slaves, masters, above all, of democracies and demagogues; it is not even the mass of sordid and unbalanced characters that he brings upon the scene—trembling slaves of ambition like Agamemnon; unscrupulous and heartless schemers like Odysseus; unstable compounds of chivalry and vanity like Achilles in the second *Iphigenia;* shallow women like Helen and terrible women like Electra in the *Orestes*—a play of which the Scholiast naïvely remarks that "the characters are all bad except Pylades," the one exception being a quite peculiarly feather-brained dealer in bloodshed. It is not points like these that are most significant. It is the gradual dying off of serenity and hope. I think most students of Euripides will agree that almost the only remnant of the spirit of

the *Alcestis* or the *Hippolytus*, the only region of clear beauty, that can still be found in the later tragedies, lies in the lyrical element. There are one or two plays, like the *Andromeda*, which seem to have escaped from reality to the country of Aristophanes' Birds, and read like mere romance; and even in the *Electra* there are the songs. Euripides had prayed some twenty years before his death: "May I not live if the Muses leave me!" And that prayer was heard. The world had turned dark, sordid, angry, under his eyes, but Poetry remained to the end radiant and stainless.

It is this state of mind and a natural development from it which afford in my judgment the best key to the understanding of *The Bacchae*, his last play, not quite finished at his death. It was written under peculiar circumstances.

We have seen from Thucydides what Athenian society had become in these last years of the death-struggle. If to Thucydides, as is possible, things seemed worse than they were, we must remember that to the more impulsive nature and equally disappointed hopes of Euripides they are not likely to have seemed better. We know that he had become in these last years increasingly unpopular in Athens;

and it is not hard, if we examine the groups and parties in Athens at the time, to understand his isolation.

Most of the high-minded and thoughtful men of the time were to some extent isolated, and many retired quietly from public notice. But Euripides was not the man to be quiet in his rejected state. He was not conciliatory, not silent, not callous. At last something occurred to make his life in Athens finally intolerable. We do not know exactly what it was. It cannot have been the destruction of his estate ; that had been destroyed long before. It cannot have been his alleged desertion by his wife ; she was either dead or over seventy. It may have been something connected with his prosecution for impiety, the charge on which Socrates was put to death a few years after. All that we know is one fragmentary sentence in the ancient 'Life of Euripides' : " He had to leave Athens because of the malicious exultation over him of nearly all the city."

Archelaüs, King of Macedon, had long been inviting him. The poet had among his papers a play called *Archelaüs*, written to celebrate this king's legendary ancestor, so he must before this have been thinking of Macedonia as a possible refuge. He went now, and seems to have lived in some wild retreat on the

northern slopes of Mount Olympus, in the Muses' country, as he phrases it:—

> In the elm-woods and the oaken,
> There where Orpheus harped of old,
> And the trees awoke and knew him,
> And the wild things gathered to him,
> As he sang amid the broken
> Glens his music manifold.

The spirit of the place passed into his writings. He had produced the *Orestes* in 408. He produced nothing, so far as has been made out, in 407. He died in 406. And after his death there appeared in Athens, under the management of his son, a play that held the Greek stage for five centuries, a strange and thrilling tragedy, enigmatical, inhuman, at times actually repellent, yet as strong and as full of beauty as the finest work of his prime.

Two other plays were produced with it. Of one, *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, we know nothing characteristic; the second, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, is in many ways remarkable. The groundwork of it is powerful and bitter, like the other plays of this period, but it is interspersed with passages and scenes of most romantic beauty; and, finally, it is only half finished. One could imagine that he had begun it in Athens, or at least before the bitter taste of Athens had worn off; that he tried afterwards to change the

tone of it to something kindlier and more beautiful; that finally he threw it aside and began a quite new play in a different style to express the new spirit that he had found.

For *The Bacchae* is somehow different in spirit from any of his other works, late or early. The old poet chose a curiously simple and even barbaric subject. It is much what we should call a Mystery Play. Dionysus, the young god born of Zeus and the Theban princess, Semelê, travelling through the world to announce his godhead, comes to his own people of Thebes, and—his own receive him not. They will not worship him simply and willingly; he constrains them to worship him with the enthusiasm of madness. The King, Pentheus, insults and imprisons the god, spies on his mystic worship, is discovered by the frenzied saints and torn limb from limb; his own mother, Agâvê, being the first to rend him.

Now it is no use pretending that this is a moral and sympathetic tale, or that Euripides palliates the atrocity of it, and tries to justify Dionysus. Euripides never palliates things. He leaves this savage story as savage as he found it. The sympathy of the audience is with Dionysus while he is persecuted; doubtful while he is just taking his vengeance; utterly against him at the end of the play. Note how

Agâvê, when restored to her right mind, refuses even to think of him and his miserable injured pride :—

AGAVE.

'Tis Dionyse hath done it. Now I see.

CADMUS.

Ye wronged him! Ye denied his deity.

AGAVE.

Show me the body of the son I love!

Note how Dionysus is left answerless when Agâvê rebukes him :—

DIONYSUS.

Ye mocked me being God. This is your wage.

AGAVE.

Should God be like a proud man in his rage?

DIONYSUS.

'Tis as my sire, Zeus, willed it long ago.

A helpless, fatalistic answer, abandoning the moral standpoint.

But the most significant point against Dionysus is the change of tone—the conversion, one might almost call it—of his own inspired 'Wild Beasts,' the Chorus of Asiatic Bacchanals, after the return of Agâvê with her son's severed head. The change is clearly visible in that marvellous scene itself. It is emphasized in the sequel. Those wild singers,

who raged so loudly in praises of the god's vengeance before they saw what it was, fall, when once they have seen it, into dead silence. True, there is a lacuna in the MS. at one point, so it is possible that they may have spoken; but as the play stands, their Leader speaks only one couplet addressed to Cadmus, whom the god has wronged :—

> Lo, I weep with thee. 'Twas but due reward
> God sent on Pentheus; but for thee . . . 'tis hard!

And they go off at the end with no remark, good or evil, about their triumphant and hateful Dionysus, uttering only those lines of brooding resignation with which Euripides closed so many of his tragedies.

Such silence in such a situation is significant. Euripides is, as usual, critical or even hostile towards the moral tone of the myth that he celebrates. There is nothing in that to surprise us.

Some critics have even tried to imagine that Pentheus is a 'sympathetic' hero; that he is right in his crusade against this bad god, as much as Hippolytus was right. But the case will not bear examination. Euripides might easily have made Pentheus 'sympathetic' if he had chosen. And he certainly has not chosen. No. As regards the conflict between

Dionysus and Pentheus, Euripides has merely followed a method very usual with him, the method, for instance, of the *Electra*. He has given a careful objective representation of the facts as alleged in the myth: "If the story is true," he says, "then it must have been like this." We have the ordinary hot-tempered and narrowly practical tyrant—not very carefully studied, by the way, and apparently not very interesting to the poet; we have a well-attested god and suitable miracles; we have a most poignant and unshrinking picture of the possibilities of religious madness. That may be taken as the groundwork of the play. It is quite probable that Euripides had seen some glimpses of Dionysus-worship on the Macedonian mountains which gave a fresh reality in his mind to the legends of ravening and wonder-working Maenads.

But when all this is admitted, there remains a fact of cardinal importance, which was seen by the older critics, and misled them so greatly that modern writers are often tempted to deny its existence. There is in *The Bacchae* real and heartfelt glorification of Dionysus.

The 'objectivity' is not kept up. Again and again in the lyrics you feel that the Maenads are no longer merely observed and analysed. The poet has entered into them,

and they into him. Again and again the words that fall from the lips of the Chorus or its Leader are not the words of a raving Bacchante, but of a gentle and deeply musing philosopher.

Probably all dramatists who possess strong personal beliefs, yield at times to the temptation of using one of their characters as a mouthpiece for their own feelings. And the Greek Chorus, a half-dramatic, half-lyrical creation, both was and was felt to be particularly suitable for such use. Of course a writer does not—or at least should not—use the drama to express his mere 'views' on ordinary and commonplace questions, to announce his side in politics or his sect in religion. But it is a method wonderfully contrived for expressing those vaguer faiths and aspirations which a man feels haunting him and calling to him, but which he cannot state in plain language or uphold with a full acceptance of responsibility. You can say the thing that wishes to be said; you 'give it its chance'; you relieve your mind of it. And if it proves to be all nonsense, well, it is not you that said it. It is only a character in one of your plays!

The religion of Dionysus as Euripides found it, already mysticised and made spiritual, half-reformed and half-petrified in sacerdotalism, by the Orphic movement, was exactly that kind of

mingled mass which lends itself to dramatic and indirect expression. It was gross as it stood; yet it could be so easily and so wonderfully idealised! Euripides seems to have felt a peculiar and almost enthusiastic interest in a further sublimation of its doctrines, a philosophic or prophet-like interpretation of the spirit that a man might see in it if he would. And meantime he did not bind himself. He let his Bacchanals rave from time to time, as they were bound to rave. He had said his say, and he was not responsible for the whole of Dionysus-worship nor yet of Orphism.

Dionysus, as Euripides takes him from the current conceptions of his day, is the God of all high emotion, inspiration, intoxication. He is the patron of poetry, especially of dramatic poetry. He has given man Wine, which is his Blood and a religious symbol. He purifies from Sin. It is unmeaning, surely, to talk of a 'merely ritual' purification as opposed to something real. Ritual, as long as it fully lives, is charged with spiritual meaning, and can often express just those transcendent things which words fail to utter—much as a look or the clasp of a hand can at times express more than a verbal greeting. Dionysus purified as spiritually as the worshipper's mind required. And he gave to the Purified a mystic Joy,

surpassing in intensity that of man, the Joy of a god or a free wild animal. The Bacchanals in this play worshipped him by his many names (vv. 725 ff.):—

> 'Iacchos, Bromios, Lord,
> God of God born;' and all the mountain felt
> And worshipped with them, and the wild things knelt,
> And ramped and gloried, and the wilderness
> Was filled with moving voices and dim stress.

That is the kind of god he celebrates.

Euripides had lived most of his life in a great town, among highly educated people; amid restless ambitions and fierce rivalries; amid general scepticism, originally caused, no doubt, in most cases, by higher religious aspirations than those of the common man, but ending largely in arid irreligion; in an ultra political community, led of late years by the kind of men of whom Plato said that if you looked into the soul of one of them you could see "its bad little eye glittering with sharpness"; in a community now hardened to the condition described in the long passage quoted above from Thucydides. Euripides had lived all his life in this society; for many years he had led it, at least in matters of art and intellect; for many years he had fought with it. And now he was free from it!

He felt like a hunted animal escaped from

its pursuers; like a fawn fled to the forest, says one lyric, in which the personal note is surely audible as a ringing undertone (vv. 862 ff.):—

> Oh, feet of a fawn to the greenwood fled
> Alone in the grass and the loveliness,
> Leap of the Hunted, no more in dread . . .

But there is still a terror in the distance behind him; he must go onward yet, to lonely regions where no voice of either man or hound may reach. "What else is wisdom?" he asks, in a marvellous passage:—

> What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavour
> Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
> To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
> To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
> And shall not loveliness be loved for ever?

He was escaped and happy; he was beyond the reach of Hate. Nay, he was safe, and those who hated him were suffering. A judgment seemed to be upon them, these men who had resolved to have no dealings with "the three deadly enemies of Empire, Pity and Eloquent Sentiments and the Generosity of Strength"; who lived, as Thucydides says in another passage (vi. 90), in dreams of wider and wider conquest, the conquest of Sicily, of South Italy, of Carthage and all her empire, of every country that touched the sea. They

had forgotten the essence of religion, forgotten the eternal laws, and the judgment in wait for those who "worship the Ruthless Will"; who dream—

> Dreams of the proud man, making great
> And greater ever
> Things that are not of God.—(vv. 885 ff.)

It is against the essential irreligion implied in these dreams that he appeals in the same song:—

> And is thy faith so much to give?
> Is it so hard a thing to see,
> That the Spirit of God, whate'er it be,
> The Law that abides and falters not, ages long,
> The Eternal and Nature-born—these things be strong?

In the epode of the same chorus, taking the ritual words of certain old Bacchic hymns and slightly changing them, he expresses his own positive doctrine more clearly:—

> Happy he, On the weary sea,
> Who hath fled the tempest and won the haven;
> Happy, whoso hath risen, free,
> Above his strivings!

Men strive with many ambitions, seethe with divers hopes, mostly conflicting, mostly of inherent worthlessness; even if they are achieved, no one is a whit the better.

> But whoe'er can know, As the long days go,
> That *to live is happy*, hath found his Heaven!

Could not the wise men of Athens understand what a child feels, what a wild beast feels, what a poet feels, that to live—to live in the presence of Nature, of Dawn and Sunset, of eternal mysteries and discoveries and wonders —is in itself a joyous thing?

"Love thou the day and the night," he says in another place. It is only so that Life can be made what it really is, a Joy: by loving not only your neighbour—he is so vivid an element in life that, unless you do love him, he will spoil all the rest!—but the actual details and processes of living. Life becomes like the voyage of Dionysus himself over magic seas, or rather, perhaps, like the more chequered voyage of Shelley's lovers:—

> While Night
> And Day, and Storm and Calm pursue their flight,
> Our ministers across the boundless sea,
> Treading each other's heels unheededly—

the alternations and pains being only "ministers" to the great composite joy.

It seemed to Euripides, in that favourite metaphor of his, which was always a little more than a metaphor, that a God had been rejected by the world that he came from. Those haggard, striving, suspicious men, full of ambition and the pride of intellect, almost destitute of emotion, unless political hatreds

can be called emotion, were hurrying through Life in the presence of august things which they never recognised, of joy and beauty which they never dreamed of. Thus it is that "the world's wise are not wise" (v. 395). The poet may have his special paradise, away from the chosen places of ordinary men, better than the sweetness of Cyprus or Paphos :—

> The high still dell Where the Muses dwell,
> Fairest of all things fair—

it is there that he will find the things truly desired of his heart, and the power to worship in peace his guiding Fire of inspiration. But Dionysus gives his Wine to all men, not to poets alone. Only by "spurning joy" can men harden his heart against them. For the rest—

> The simple nameless herd of Humanity
> Hath deeds and faith that are truth enough for me !

It is a mysticism which includes democracy as it includes the love of your neighbour. They are both necessary details in the inclusive end. It implies that trust in the 'simple man' which is so characteristic of most idealists and most reformers. It implies the doctrine of Equality—a doctrine essentially religious and mystical, continually disproved

in every fresh sense in which it can be formulated, and yet remaining one of the living faiths of men.

It is at first sight strange, this belittling of 'the Wise' and all their learning. Euripides had been all his life the poet militant of knowledge, the apostle of progress and enlightenment. Yet there is no real contradiction. It is only that the Wise are not wise enough, that the Knowledge which a man has attained is such a poor and narrow thing compared with the Knowledge that he dreamed of. In one difficult and beautiful passage Euripides seems[1] to give us his own apology (vv. 1005 ff.):—

> Knowledge, we are not foes!
> I seek thee diligently;
> But the world with a great wind blows,
> Shining, and not from thee;
> Blowing to beautiful things,
> On amid dark and light,
> Till Life through the trammellings
> Of Laws that are not the Right,
> Breaks, clean and pure, and sings
> Glorying to God in the height!

One feels grateful for that voice from the old Euripides amid the strange new tones of *The Bacchae*.

[1] I say "seems," because the reading is conjectural. I suggest *ἀέντων* (="let them blow") in place of the MS. *ἀεὶ τῶν*. The passage is generally abandoned as hopelessly corrupt.

It is not for us to consider at present how far this doctrine is true, nor even how far it is good or bad. We need only see what the essence of it is. That the end of life is not in the future, not in external objects, not a thing to be won by success or good fortune, nor to be deprived of by the actions of others. Live according to Nature, and Life itself is happiness. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you—here and now. You have but to accept it and live with it—not obscure it by striving and hating and looking in the wrong place.

On one side this is a very practical and lowly doctrine—the doctrine of contentment, the doctrine of making things better by liking and helping them. On the other side, it is an appeal to the almost mystical faith of the poet or artist who dwells in all of us. Probably most people have had the momentary experience—it may come to one on Swiss mountains, on Surrey commons, in crowded streets, on the tops of omnibuses, inside London houses—of being, as it seems, surrounded by an incomprehensible and almost intolerable vastness of beauty and delight and interest—if only one could grasp it or enter into it! That is just the rub, a critic may say. It is no use telling all the world to find happiness by living permanently at the level of these fugitive

moments—moments which in high poets and prophets may extend to days. It is simpler and quite as practical to advise them all to have ten thousand a year.

It is not necessary to struggle with that point. But it is worth while to remark in closing that historically the line here suggested by Euripides was followed by almost all the higher minds of antiquity and early Christianity. Excepting Aristotle, who clung characteristically to the concrete city and the dutiful tax-paying citizen, all the great leaders of Greek thought turned away from the world and took refuge in the Soul. The words used accidentally above—Live according to Nature — formed the very foundation of moral doctrine not only for the Stoics, but for all the schools of philosophy. The Platonists sought for the Good, the Stoics for Virtue, the Epicureans for Pleasure; but the various names are names for the same End; and it is always an End, not future, but existing—not without or afar, but inside each man's self.

The old devotion to Fifth Century Athens, to that Princess of Cities, who had so fearfully fallen and dragged her lovers through such bloodstained dust, lived on with a kind of fascination as a symbol in the minds of these deeply individual philosophers of later

Hellenism and early Christianity. But it was no longer a city on earth that they sought, not one to be served by military conquests, nor efficient police, nor taxes and public education. It was "the one great city in which all are free," or it was the city of Man's Soul. "The poet has said," writes a late Stoic, who had a pretty large concrete city of his own to look after, "The poet has said: O Beloved City of Cecrops: canst thou not say: O Beloved City of God?"

THE SAILING OF DIONYSUS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

THE GODDESS APHRODITÊ.

THE GODDESS ARTEMIS.

THESEUS, *King of Athens and Trozên.*

PHAEDRA, *daughter of Minos, King of Crete, wife to Theseus.*

HIPPOLYTUS, *bastard son of Theseus and the Amazon Hippolytê.*

THE NURSE OF PHAEDRA.

AN OLD HUNTSMAN.

A HENCHMAN OF HIPPOLYTUS.

A CHORUS OF HUNTSMEN.

A CHORUS OF TROZENIAN WOMEN, WITH THEIR LEADER.

ATTENDANTS ON THE THREE ROYAL PERSONS.

"*The scene is laid in Trozên. The play was first acted when Epameinon was Archon, Olympiad* 87, *year* 4 (B.C. 429). *Euripides was first, Iophon second, Ion third.*"

HIPPOLYTUS

The scene represents the front of the royal castle of Trozên, the chief door being in the centre, facing the audience. Two statues are visible, that of ARTEMIS *on the right, that of* APHRODITE *or* CYPRIS *on the left. The goddess* APHRODITE *is discovered alone.*

APHRODITE.

Great among men, and not unnamed am I,
The Cyprian, in God's inmost halls on high.
And wheresoe'er from Pontus to the far
Red West men dwell, and see the glad day-star,
And worship Me, the pious heart I bless,
And wreck that life that lives in stubbornness.
For that there is, even in a great God's mind,
That hungereth for the praise of human kind.
So runs my word; and soon the very deed
Shall follow. For this Prince of Theseus' seed,
Hippolytus, child of that dead Amazon,
And reared by saintly Pittheus in his own
Strait ways, hath dared, alone of all Trozên,
To hold me least of spirits and most mean,
And spurns my spell and seeks no woman's kiss.
But great Apollo's sister, Artemis,

He holds of all most high, gives love and praise,
And through the wild dark woods for ever strays,
He and the Maid together, with swift hounds
To slay all angry beasts from out these bounds,
To more than mortal friendship consecrate!
I grudge it not. No grudge know I, nor hate;
Yet, seeing he hath offended, I this day
Shall smite Hippolytus. Long since my way
Was opened, nor needs now much labour more.
For once from Pittheus' castle to the shore
Of Athens came Hippolytus over-seas
Seeking the vision of the Mysteries.
And Phaedra there, his father's Queen high-born,
Saw him, and, as she saw, her heart was torn
With great love, by the working of my will.
And for his sake, long since, on Pallas' hill,
Deep in the rock, that Love no more might roam,
She built a shrine, and named it *Love-at-home:*
And the rock held it, but its face alway
Seeks Trozên o'er the seas. Then came the day
When Theseus, for the blood of kinsmen shed,
Spake doom of exile on himself, and fled,
Phaedra beside him, even to this Trozên.
And here that grievous and amazèd Queen,
Wounded and wondering, with ne'er a word,
Wastes slowly; and her secret none hath heard
Nor dreamed.
But never thus this love shall end!
To Theseus' ear some whisper will I send,
And all be bare! And that proud Prince, my foe,
His sire shall slay with curses. Even so
Endeth that boon the great Lord of the Main
To Theseus gave, the Three Prayers not in vain.

And she, not in dishonour, yet shall die.
I would not rate this woman's pain so high
As not to pay mine haters in full fee
That vengeance that shall make all well with me.

But soft, here comes he, striding from the chase,
Our Prince Hippolytus !—I will go my ways.—
And hunters at his heels : and a loud throng
Glorying Artemis with praise and song !
Little he knows that Hell's gates opened are,
And this his last look on the great Day-star !

[APHRODITE *withdraws, unseen by* HIPPOLYTUS *and a band of huntsmen, who enter from the left, singing. They pass the Statue of* APHRODITE *without notice.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

Follow, O follow me,
Singing on your ways
Her in whose hand are we,
Her whose own flock we be,
The Zeus-Child, the Heavenly ;
To Artemis be praise !

HUNTSMEN.

Hail to thee, Maiden blest,
Proudest and holiest :
God's Daughter, great in bliss,
Leto-born, Artemis !
Hail to thee, Maiden, far
Fairest of all that are,

Yea, and most high thine home,
Child of the Father's hall;
Hear, O most virginal,
Hear, O most fair of all,
In high God's golden dome.

[*The huntsmen have gathered about the altar of* ARTEMIS. HIPPOLYTUS *now advances from them, and approaches the Statue with a wreath in his hand.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

To thee this wreathèd garland, from a green
And virgin meadow bear I, O my Queen,
Where never shepherd leads his grazing ewes
Nor scythe has touched. Only the river dews
Gleam, and the spring bee sings, and in the glade
Hath Solitude her mystic garden made.
No evil hand may cull it: only he
Whose heart hath known the heart of Purity,
Unlearned of man, and true whate'er befall.
Take therefore from pure hands this coronal,
O mistress loved, thy golden hair to twine.
For, sole of living men, this grace is mine,
To dwell with thee, and speak, and hear replies
Of voice divine, though none may see thine eyes.
Oh, keep me to the end in this same road!

[*An* OLD HUNTSMAN, *who has stood apart from the rest, here comes up to* HIPPOLYTUS.

HUNTSMAN.

My Prince—for 'Master' name I none but God—
Gave I good counsel, wouldst thou welcome it?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Right gladly, friend; else were I poor of wit.

HUNTSMAN.

Knowest thou one law, that through the world has won?

HIPPOLYTUS.

What wouldst thou? And how runs thy law? Say on.

HUNTSMAN.

It hates that Pride that speaks not all men fair!

HIPPOLYTUS.

And rightly. Pride breeds hatred everywhere.

HUNTSMAN.

And good words love, and grace in all men's sight?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Aye, and much gain withal, for trouble slight.

HUNTSMAN.

How deem'st thou of the Gods? Are they the same?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Surely: we are but fashioned on their frame.

HUNTSMAN.

Why then wilt thou be proud, and worship not . . .

HIPPOLYTUS.

Whom? If the name be speakable, speak out!

HUNTSMAN.

She stands here at thy gate: the Cyprian Queen!

HIPPOLYTUS.

I greet her from afar: my life is clean.

HUNTSMAN.

Clean? Nay, proud, proud; a mark for all to scan!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Each mind hath its own bent, for God or man.

HUNTSMAN.

God grant thee happiness . . . and wiser thought!

HIPPOLYTUS.

These Spirits that reign in darkness like me not.

HUNTSMAN.

What the Gods ask, O Son, that man must pay!

HIPPOLYTUS (*turning from him to the others*).

On, huntsmen, to the Castle! Make your way
Straight to the feast room; 'tis a merry thing
After the chase, a board of banqueting.
And see the steeds be groomed, and in array
The chariot dight. I drive them forth to-day.

[*He pauses, and makes a slight gesture of reverence to the Statue on the left. Then to the* OLD HUNTSMAN.

That for thy Cyprian, friend, and nought beside!

[HIPPOLYTUS *follows the huntsmen, who stream off by the central door into the Castle. The* OLD HUNTSMAN *remains.*

HUNTSMAN (*approaching the Statue and kneeling*).

O Cyprian—for a young man in his pride
I will not follow !—here before thee, meek,
In that one language that a slave may speak,
I pray thee ; Oh, if some wild heart in froth
O youth surges against thee, be not wroth
For ever ! Nay, be far and hear not then :
Gods should be gentler and more wise than men !

[*He rises and follows the others into the Castle.*

The Orchestra is empty for a moment, then there enter from right and left several Trozenian women, young and old. Their number eventually amounts to fifteen.

CHORUS.

There riseth a rock-born river,
Of Ocean's tribe, men say ;
The crags of it gleam and quiver,
And pitchers dip in the spray :
A woman was there with raiment white
To bathe and spread in the warm sunlight,
And she told a tale to me there by the river,
The tale of the Queen and her evil day :

How, ailing beyond allayment,
Within she hath bowed her head,
And with shadow of silken raiment
The bright brown hair bespread.
For three long days she hath lain forlorn,
Her lips untainted of flesh or corn,
For that secret sorrow beyond allayment
That steers to the far sad shore of the dead.

Some Women.

Is this some Spirit, O child of man?
Doth Hecat hold thee perchance, or Pan?
Doth She of the Mountains work her ban,
Or the dread Corybantes bind thee?

Others.

Nay, is it sin that upon thee lies,
Sin of forgotten sacrifice,
In thine own Dictynna's sea-wild eyes?
Who in Limna here can find thee;
For the Deep's dry floor is her easy way,
And she moves in the salt wet whirl of the spray.

Other Women.

Or doth the Lord of Erechtheus' race,
Thy Theseus, watch for a fairer face,
For secret arms in a silent place,
Far from thy love or chiding?

Others.

Or hath there landed, amid the loud
Hum of Piraeus' sailor-crowd,
Some Cretan venturer, weary-browed,
Who bears to the Queen some tiding;
Some far home-grief, that hath bowed her low,
And chained her soul to a bed of woe?

An Older Woman.

Nay—know ye not?—this burden hath alway lain
On the devious being of woman; yea, burdens twain,
The burden of Wild Will and the burden of Pain.
Through my heart once that wind of terror sped;
But I, in fear confessèd,

Cried from the dark to Her in heavenly bliss,
The Helper of Pain, the Bow-Maid Artemis:
Whose feet I praise for ever, where they tread
Far off among the blessèd!

THE LEADER.

But see, the Queen's grey nurse at the door,
Sad-eyed and sterner, methinks, than of yore,
With the Queen. Doth she lead her hither,
To the wind and sun?—Ah, fain would I know
What strange betiding hath blanched that brow,
And made that young life wither.

[*The* NURSE *comes out from the central door, followed by* PHAEDRA, *who is supported by two handmaids. They make ready a couch for* PHAEDRA *to lie upon.*

NURSE.

O sick and sore are the days of men!
What wouldst thou? What shall I change again?
Here is the Sun for thee; here is the sky;
And thy weary pillows wind-swept lie,
By the castle door.
But the cloud of thy brow is dark, I ween;
And soon thou wilt back to thy bower within:
So swift to change is the path of thy feet,
And near things hateful, and far things sweet;
So was it before!

Oh, pain were better than tending pain!
For that were single, and this is twain,
With grief of heart and labour of limb.
Yet all man's life is but ailing and dim,
And rest upon earth comes never.

But if any far-off state there be,
Dearer than life to mortality;
The hand of the Dark hath hold thereof,
And mist is under and mist above.
And so we are sick for life, and cling
On earth to this nameless and shining thing.
For other life is a fountain sealed,
And the deeps below us are unrevealed,
And we drift on legends for ever!

[PHAEDRA *during this has been laid on her couch; she speaks to the handmaids.*

PHAEDRA.

Yes; lift me: not my head so low.
There, hold my arms.—Fair arms they seem!—
My poor limbs scarce obey me now!
Take off that hood that weighs my brow,
And let my long hair stream.

NURSE.

Nay, toss not, Child, so feveredly.
The sickness best will win relief
By quiet rest and constancy.
All men have grief.

PHAEDRA (*not noticing her*).

Oh for a deep and dewy spring,
With runlets cold to draw and drink!
And a great meadow blossoming,
Long-grassed, and poplars in a ring,
To rest me by the brink!

NURSE.

Nay, Child! Shall strangers hear this tone
So wild, and thoughts so fever-flown?

PHAEDRA.

Oh, take me to the Mountain! Oh,
Past the great pines and through the wood,
Up where the lean hounds softly go,
A-whine for wild things' blood,
And madly flies the dappled roe.
O God, to shout and speed them there,
An arrow by my chestnut hair
Drawn tight, and one keen glimmering spear--
Ah! if I could!

NURSE.

What wouldst thou with them—fancies all!—
Thy hunting and thy fountain brink?
What wouldst thou? By the city wall
Canst hear our own brook plash and fall
Downhill, if thou wouldst drink.

PHAEDRA.

O Mistress of the Sea-lorn Mere
Where horse-hoofs beat the sand and sing,
O Artemis, that I were there
To tame Enetian steeds and steer
Swift chariots in the ring!

NURSE.

Nay, mountainward but now thy hands
Yearned out, with craving for the chase;
And now toward the unseaswept sands
Thou roamest, where the coursers pace!

O wild young steed, what prophet knows
The power that holds thy curb, and throws
Thy swift heart from its race?

[*At these words* PHAEDRA *gradually recovers herself and pays attention.*

PHAEDRA.

What have I said? Woe's me! And where
Gone straying from my wholesome mind?
What? Did I fall in some god's snare?
—Nurse, veil my head again, and blind
Mine eyes.—There is a tear behind
That lash.—Oh, I am sick with shame!
Aye, but it hath a sting,
To come to reason; yet the name
Of madness is an awful thing.—
Could I but die in one swift flame
Unthinking, unknowing!

NURSE.

I veil thy face, Child.—Would that so
Mine own were veiled for evermore,
So sore I love thee! . . . Though the lore
Of long life mocks me, and I know
How love should be a lightsome thing
Not rooted in the deep o' the heart;
With gentle ties, to twine apart
If need so call, or closer cling.—
Why do I love thee so? O fool,
O fool, the heart that bleeds for twain,
And builds, men tell us, walls of pain,
To walk by love's unswerving rule,

The same for ever, stern and true!
For 'Thorough' is no word of peace:
'Tis 'Naught-too-much' makes trouble cease,
And many a wise man bows thereto.

[*The* LEADER OF THE CHORUS *here approaches the* NURSE.

LEADER.

Nurse of our Queen, thou watcher old and true,
We see her great affliction, but no clue
Have we to learn the sickness. Wouldst thou tell
The name and sort thereof, 'twould like us well.

NURSE.

Small leechcraft have I, and she tells no man.

LEADER.

Thou know'st no cause? Nor when the unrest began?

NURSE.

It all comes to the same. She will not speak.

LEADER (*turning and looking at* PHAEDRA).

How she is changed and wasted! And how weak!

NURSE.

'Tis the third day she hath fasted utterly.

LEADER.

What, is she mad? Or doth she seek to die?

NURSE.

I know not. But to death it sure must lead.

LEADER.

'Tis strange that Theseus takes hereof no heed.

NURSE.

She hides her wound, and vows it is not so.

LEADER.

Can he not look into her face and know?

NURSE.

Nay, he is on a journey these last days.

LEADER.

Canst thou not force her, then? Or think of ways
To trap the secret of the sick heart's pain?

NURSE.

Have I not tried all ways, and all in vain?
Yet will I cease not now, and thou shalt tell
If in her grief I serve my mistress well!
[*She goes across to where* PHAEDRA *lies; and presently, while speaking, kneels by her.*
Dear daughter mine, all that before was said
Let both of us forget; and thou instead
Be kindlier, and unlock that prisoned brow.
And I, who followed then the wrong road, now
Will leave it and be wiser. If thou fear
Some secret sickness, there be women here
To give thee comfort. [PHAEDRA *shakes her head.*
No; not secret? Then
Is it a sickness meet for aid of men?
Speak, that a leech may tend thee.

Silent still?
Nay, Child, what profits silence? If 'tis ill
This that I counsel, make me see the wrong:
If well, then yield to me.
Nay, Child, I long
For one kind word, one look!
[PHAEDRA *lies motionless. The* NURSE *rises.*
Oh, woe is me!
Women, we labour here all fruitlessly,
All as far off as ever from her heart!
She ever scorned me, and now hears no part
Of all my prayers! [*Turning to* PHAEDRA *again.*
Nay, hear thou shalt, and be,
If so thou will, more wild than the wild sea;
But know, thou art thy little ones' betrayer!
If thou die now, shall child of thine be heir
To Theseus' castle? Nay, not thine, I ween,
But hers! That barbèd Amazonian Queen
Hath left a child to bend thy children low,
A bastard royal-hearted—sayst not so?—
Hippolytus . . .

PHAEDRA.

Ah!
[*She starts up, sitting, and throws the veil off.*

NURSE.

That stings thee?

PHAEDRA.

Nurse, most sore
Thou hast hurt me! In God's name, speak that name
no more.

NURSE.

Thou seest? Thy mind is clear; but with thy mind
Thou wilt not save thy children, nor be kind
To thine own life.

PHAEDRA.

My children? Nay, most dear
I love them.—Far, far other grief is here.

NURSE (*after a pause, wondering*).

Thy hand is clean, O Child, from stain of blood?

PHAEDRA.

My hand is clean; but is my heart, O God?

NURSE.

Some enemy's spell hath made thy spirit dim?

PHAEDRA.

He hates me not that slays me, nor I him.

NURSE.

Theseus, the King, hath wronged thee in man's wise?

PHAEDRA.

Ah, could but I stand guiltless in his eyes!

NURSE.

O speak! What is this death-fraught mystery?

PHAEDRA.

Nay, leave me to my wrong. I wrong not thee.

NURSE (*suddenly throwing herself in supplication at* PHAEDRA'S *feet*).

Not wrong me, whom thou wouldst all desolate leave!

PHAEDRA (*rising and trying to move away*).

What wouldst thou? Force me? Clinging to my sleeve?

NURSE.

Yea, to thy knees; and weep; and let not go!

PHAEDRA.

Woe to thee, Woman, if thou learn it, woe!

NURSE.

I know no bitterer woe than losing thee.

PHAEDRA.

I am lost! Yet the deed shall honour me.

NURSE.

Why hide what honours thee? 'Tis all I claim!

PHAEDRA.

Why, so I build up honour out of shame!

NURSE.

Then speak, and higher still thy fame shall stand.

PHAEDRA.

Go, in God's name!—Nay, leave me; loose my hand!

NURSE.

Never, until thou grant me what I pray.

PHAEDRA (*yielding, after a pause*).

So be it. I dare not tear that hand away.

NURSE (*rising and releasing* PHAEDRA).

Tell all thou wilt, Daughter. I speak no more.

PHAEDRA (*after a long pause*).

Mother, poor Mother, that didst love so sore!

NURSE.

What mean'st thou, Child? The Wild Bull of the Tide?

PHAEDRA.

And thou, sad sister, Dionysus' bride!

NURSE.

Child! wouldst thou shame the house where thou wast born?

PHAEDRA.

And I the third, sinking most all-forlorn!

NURSE (*to herself*).

I am all lost and feared. What will she say?

PHAEDRA.

From there my grief comes, not from yesterday.

NURSE.

I come no nearer to thy parable.

PHAEDRA.

Oh, would that thou couldst tell what I must tell!

NURSE.

I am no seer in things I wot not of.

PHAEDRA (*again hesitating*).

What is it that they mean, who say men . . . love?

NURSE.

A thing most sweet, my Child, yet dolorous.

PHAEDRA.

Only the half, belike, hath fallen on us!

NURSE (*starting*).

On thee? Love?—Oh, what sayst thou? What man's son?

PHAEDRA.

What man's? There was a Queen, an Amazon . . .

NURSE.

Hippolytus, sayst thou?

PHAEDRA (*again wrapping her face in the veil*).

Nay, 'twas thou, not I!

[PHAEDRA *sinks back on the couch and covers her face again. The* NURSE *starts violently from her and walks up and down.*

NURSE.

O God! what wilt thou say, Child? Wouldst thou try
To kill me?—Oh, 'tis more than I can bear;
Women, I will no more of it, this glare
Of hated day, this shining of the sky.
I will fling down my body, and let it lie
Till life be gone!

Women, God rest with you,
My works are over! For the pure and true
Are forced to evil, against their own heart's vow,
And love it!

[*She suddenly sees the Statue of* CYPRIS, *and stands with her eyes riveted upon it.*

Ah, Cyprian! No god art thou,
But more than god, and greater, that hath thrust
Me and my queen and all our house to dust!

[*She throws herself on the ground close to the statue.*

CHORUS.

Some Women.

O Women, have ye heard? Nay, dare ye hear
The desolate cry of the young Queen's misery?

A Woman.

My Queen, I love thee dear,
Yet liefer were I dead than framed like thee.

Others.

Woe, woe to me for this thy bitter bane,
Surely the food man feeds upon is pain!

Others.

How wilt thou bear thee through this livelong day,
Lost, and thine evil naked to the light?
Strange things are close upon us—who shall say
How strange?—save one thing that is plain to sight,
The stroke of the Cyprian and the fall thereof
On thee, thou child of the Isle of fearful Love!

[PHAEDRA *during this has risen from the couch and comes forward collectedly. As she speaks the* NURSE *gradually rouses herself, and listens more calmly.*

PHAEDRA.

O Women, dwellers in this portal-seat
Of Pelops' land, gazing towards my Crete,
How oft, in other days than these, have I
Through night's long hours thought of man's misery,
And how this life is wrecked! And, to mine eyes,
Not in man's knowledge, not in wisdom, lies
The lack that makes for sorrow. Nay, we scan
And know the right—for wit hath many a man—
But will not to the last end strive and serve.
For some grow too soon weary, and some swerve
To other paths, setting before the Right
The diverse far-off image of Delight;
And many are delights beneath the sun!
Long hours of converse; and to sit alone
Musing—a deadly happiness!—and Shame:
Though two things there be hidden in one name,
And Shame can be slow poison if it will!
This is the truth I saw then, and see still;
Nor is there any magic that can stain
That white truth for me, or make me blind again.
Come, I will show thee how my spirit hath moved.
When the first stab came, and I knew I loved,
I cast about how best to face mine ill.
And the first thought that came, was to be still
And hide my sickness.—For no trust there is
In man's tongue, that so well admonishes
And counsels and betrays, and waxes fat
With griefs of its own gathering!—After that
I would my madness bravely bear, and try
To conquer by mine own heart's purity.
My third mind, when these two availed me naught

To quell love, was to die—

[*Motion of protest among the Women.*

the best, best thought—

—Gainsay me not—of all that man can say!
I would not have mine honour hidden away;
Why should I have my shame before men's eyes
Kept living? And I knew, in deadly wise,
Shame was the deed and shame the suffering;
And I a woman, too, to face the thing,
Despised of all!

Oh, utterly accurst
Be she of women, whoso dared the first
To cast her honour out to a strange man!
'Twas in some great house, surely, that began
This plague upon us; then the baser kind,
When the good led towards evil, followed blind
And joyous! Cursed be they whose lips are clean
And wise and seemly, but their hearts within
Rank with bad daring! How can they, O Thou
That walkest on the waves, great Cyprian, how
Smile in their husbands' faces, and not fall,
Not cower before the Darkness that knows all,
Aye, dread the dead still chambers, lest one day
The stones find voice, and all be finished!

Nay,
Friends, 'tis for this I die; lest I stand there
Having shamed my husband and the babes I bare.
In ancient Athens they shall some day dwell,
My babes, free men, free-spoken, honourable,
And when one asks their mother, proud of me!
For, oh, it cows a man, though bold he be,
To know a mother's or a father's sin.
'Tis written, one way is there, one, to win

This life's race, could man keep it from his birth,
A true clean spirit. And through all this earth
To every false man, that hour comes apace
When Time holds up a mirror to his face,
And girl-like, marvelling, there he stares to see
How foul his heart! Be it not so with me!

LEADER OF CHORUS.

Ah God, how sweet is virtue, and how wise,
And honour its due meed in all men's eyes!

NURSE (*who has now risen and recovered herself*).

Mistress, a sharp swift terror struck me low
A moment since, hearing of this thy woe.
But now—I was a coward! And men say
Our second thought the wiser is alway.
This is no monstrous thing; no grief too dire
To meet with quiet thinking. In her ire
A most strong goddess hath swept down on thee.
Thou lovest. Is that so strange? Many there be
Beside thee! . . . And because thou lovest, wilt fall
And die! And must all lovers die, then? All
That are or shall be? A blithe law for them!
Nay, when in might she swoops, no strength can stem
Cypris; and if man yields him, she is sweet;
But is he proud and stubborn? From his feet
She lifts him, and—how think you?—flings to scorn!
She ranges with the stars of eve and morn,
She wanders in the heaving of the sea,
And all life lives from her.—Aye, this is she
That sows Love's seed and brings Love's fruit to birth;
And great Love's brethren are all we on earth!

Nay, they who con grey books of ancient days
Or dwell among the Muses, tell—and praise—
How Zeus himself once yearned for Semelê;
How maiden Eôs in her radiancy
Swept Kephalos to heaven away, away,
For sore love's sake. And there they dwell, men say,
And fear not, fret not; for a thing too stern
Hath met and crushed them!
And must thou, then, turn
And struggle? Sprang there from thy father's blood
Thy little soul all lonely? Or the god
That rules thee, is he other than our gods?
Nay, yield thee to men's ways, and kiss their rods!
How many, deem'st thou, of men good and wise,
Know their own home's blot, and avert their eyes?
How many fathers, when a son has strayed
And toiled beneath the Cyprian, bring him aid,
Not chiding? And man's wisdom e'er hath been
To keep what is not good to see, unseen!
A straight and perfect life is not for man;
Nay, in a shut house, let him, if he can,
'Mid sheltered rooms, make all lines true. But here,
Out in the wide sea fallen, and full of fear,
Hopest thou so easily to swim to land?
Canst thou but set thine ill days on one hand
And more good days on the other, verily,
O child of woman, life is well with thee!
[*She pauses, and then draws nearer to* PHAEDRA.
Nay, dear my daughter, cease thine evil mind,
Cease thy fierce pride! For pride it is, and blind,
To seek to outpass gods!—Love on and dare:
A god hath willed it! And, since pain is there,

Make the pain sleep! Songs are there to bring calm,
And magic words. And I shall find the balm,
Be sure, to heal thee. Else in sore dismay
Were men, could not we women find our way!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Help is there, Queen, in all this woman says,
To ease thy suffering. But 'tis thee I praise;
Albeit that praise is harder to thine ear
Than all her chiding was, and bitterer!

PHAEDRA.

Oh, this it is hath flung to dogs and birds
Men's lives and homes and cities—fair false words!
Oh, why speak things to please our ears? We crave
Not that. 'Tis honour, honour, we must save!

NURSE.

Why prate so proud? 'Tis no words, brave nor base,
Thou cravest; 'tis a man's arms!

[PHAEDRA *moves indignantly.*

Up and face
The truth of what thou art, and name it straight!
Were not thy life thrown open here for Fate
To beat on; hadst thou been a woman pure
Or wise or strong; never had I for lure
Of joy nor heartache led thee on to this!
But when a whole life one great battle is,
To win or lose—no man can blame me then.

PHAEDRA.

Shame on thee! Lock those lips, and ne'er again
Let word nor thought so foul have harbour there!

NURSE.

Foul, if thou wilt: but better than the fair
For thee and me. And better, too, the deed
Behind them, if it save thee in thy need,
Than that word Honour thou wilt die to win!

PHAEDRA.

Nay, in God's name,—such wisdom and such sin
Are all about thy lips!—urge me no more.
For all the soul within me is wrought o'er
By Love; and if thou speak and speak, I may
Be spent, and drift where now I shrink away.

NURSE.

Well, if thou wilt!—'Twere best never to err,
But, having erred, to take a counsellor
Is second.—Mark me now. I have within
Love-philtres, to make peace where storm hath been,
That, with no shame, no scathe of mind, shall save
Thy life from anguish; wilt but thou be brave!
[*To herself, reflecting.*
Ah, but from him, the well-beloved, some sign
We need, or word, or raiment's hem, to twine
Amid the charm, and one spell knit from twain.

PHAEDRA.

Is it a potion or a salve? Be plain.

NURSE.

Who knows? Seek to be helped, Child, not to know.

PHAEDRA.

Why art thou ever subtle? I dread thee, so.

NURSE.

Thou wouldst dread everything!—What dost thou dread?

PHAEDRA.

Lest to his ear some word be whisperèd.

NURSE.

Let be, Child! I will make all well with thee!
—Only do thou, O Cyprian of the Sea,
Be with me! And mine own heart, come what may,
Shall know what ear to seek, what word to say!

[*The* NURSE, *having spoken these last words in prayer apart to the Statue of* CYPRIS, *turns back and goes into the house.* PHAEDRA *sits pensive again on her couch till towards the end of the following Song, when she rises and bends close to the door.*

CHORUS.

Erôs, Erôs, who blindest, tear by tear,
Men's eyes with hunger; thou swift Foe, that pliest
Deep in our hearts joy like an edgèd spear;
Come not to me with Evil haunting near,
Wrath on the wind, nor jarring of the clear
Wing's music as thou fliest!
There is no shaft that burneth, not in fire,
Not in wild stars, far off and flinging fear,
As in thine hands the shaft of All Desire,
Erôs, Child of the Highest!

In vain, in vain, by old Alpheüs' shore
The blood of many bulls doth stain the river,
And all Greece bows on Phœbus' Pythian floor;
Yet bring we to the Master of Man no store,
The Keybearer, who standeth at the door
Close-barred, where hideth ever
The heart of the shrine. Yea, though he sack man's life
Like a sacked city, and moveth evermore
Girt with calamity and strange ways of strife,
Him have we worshipped never!

There roamed a Steed in Oechalia's wild,
A Maid without yoke, without Master,
And Love she knew not, that far King's child:
But he came, he came, with a song in the night,
With fire, with blood; and she strove in flight,
A Torrent Spirit, a Maenad white,
Faster and vainly faster,
Sealed unto Heracles by the Cyprian's Might.
Alas, thou Bride of Disaster!

O Mouth of Dirce, O god-built wall,
That Dirce's wells run under,
Ye know the Cyprian's fleet footfall!
Ye saw the heaven's around her flare,
When she lulled to her sleep that Mother fair
Of Twy-born Bacchus, and decked her there
The Bride of the bladed Thunder.
For her breath is on all that hath life, and she floats in the air,
Bee-like, death-like, a wonder.

[*During the last lines* PHAEDRA *has approached the door and is listening.*

PHAEDRA.

Silence, ye Women! Something is amiss.

LEADER.

How? In the house?—Phaedra, what fear is this?

PHAEDRA.

Let me but listen! There are voices. Hark!

LEADER.

I hold my peace: yet is thy presage dark.

PHAEDRA.

Oh, misery!
O God, that such a thing should fall on me!

LEADER.

What sound, what word,
O Woman, Friend, makes that sharp terror start
Out at thy lips? What ominous cry half-heard
Hath leapt upon thine heart?

PHAEDRA.

I am undone!—Bend to the door and hark,
Hark what a tone sounds there, and sinks away!

LEADER.

Thou art beside the bars. 'Tis thine to mark
The castle's floating message. Say, Oh, say
What thing hath come to thee?

PHAEDRA (*calmly*).

Why, what thing should it be?
The son of that proud Amazon speaks again
In bitter wrath: speaks to my handmaiden!

LEADER.

I hear a noise of voices, nothing clear.
For thee the din hath words, as through barred locks
Floating, at thy heart it knocks.

PHAEDRA.

"Pander of Sin" it says.—Now canst thou hear?—
And there: "Betrayer of a master's bed."

LEADER.

Ah me, betrayed! Betrayed!
Sweet Princess, thou art ill bested,
Thy secret brought to light, and ruin near,
By her thou heldest dear,
By her that should have loved thee and obeyed!

PHAEDRA.

Aye, I am slain. She thought to help my fall
With love instead of honour, and wrecked all.

LEADER.

Where wilt thou turn thee, where?
And what help seek, O wounded to despair?

PHAEDRA.

I know not, save one thing, to die right soon.
For such as me God keeps no other boon.

[*The door in the centre bursts open, and* HIPPOLYTUS *comes forth, closely followed by the* NURSE. PHAEDRA *cowers aside.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

O Mother Earth, O Sun that makest clean,
What poison have I heard, what speechless sin!

NURSE.

Hush, O my Prince, lest others mark, and guess . . .

HIPPOLYTUS.

I have heard horrors! Shall I hold my peace?

NURSE.

Yea, by this fair right arm, Son, by thy pledge . . .

HIPPOLYTUS.

Down with that hand! Touch not my garment's edge!

NURSE.

Oh, by thy knees, be silent or I die!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Why, when thy speech was all so guiltless? Why?

NURSE.

It is not meet, fair Son, for every ear!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Good words can bravely forth, and have no fear.

NURSE.

Thine oath, thine oath! I took thine oath before!

HIPPOLYTUS.

'Twas but my tongue, 'twas not my soul that swore.

NURSE.

O Son, what wilt thou? Wilt thou slay thy kin?

HIPPOLYTUS.

I own no kindred with the spawn of sin!
[*He flings her from him.*

NURSE.

Nay, spare me! Man was born to err; oh, spare!

HIPPOLYTUS.

O God, why hast Thou made this gleaming snare,
Woman, to dog us on the happy earth?
Was it Thy will to make Man, why his birth
Through Love and Woman? Could we not have rolled
Our store of prayer and offering, royal gold,
Silver and weight of bronze before Thy feet,
And bought of God new child-souls, as were meet
For each man's sacrifice, and dwelt in homes
Free, where nor Love nor Woman goes and comes?
How, is that daughter not a bane confessed,
Whom her own sire sends forth—(He knows her best!)—
And, will some man but take her, pays a dower!
And he, poor fool, takes home the poison-flower;
Laughs to hang jewels on the deadly thing
He joys in; labours for her robe-wearing,
Till wealth and peace are dead. He smarts the less
In whose high seat is set a Nothingness,
A woman naught availing. Worst of all
The wise deep-thoughted! Never in my hall
May she sit throned who thinks and waits and sighs!
For Cypris breeds most evil in the wise,
And least in her whose heart has naught within;
For puny wit can work but puny sin.
Why do we let their handmaids pass the gate?
Wild beasts were best, voiceless and fanged, to wait

About their rooms, that they might speak with none,
Nor ever hear one answering human tone!
But now dark women in still chambers lay
Plans that creep out into the light of day
On handmaids' lips— [*Turning to the* NURSE
As thine accursèd head
Braved the high honour of my Father's bed,
And came to traffic. . . . Our white torrent's spray
Shall drench mine ears to wash those words away!
And couldst thou dream that *I* . . .? I feel impure
Still at the very hearing! Know for sure,
Woman, naught but mine honour saves ye both.
Hadst thou not trapped me with that guileful oath,
No power had held me secret till the King
Knew all! But now, while he is journeying,
I too will go my ways and make no sound.
And when he comes again, I shall be found
Beside him, silent, watching with what grace
Thou and thy mistress greet him face to face!
Then shall I have the taste of it, and know
What woman's guile is.—Woe upon you, woe!
How can I too much hate you, while the ill
Ye work upon the world grows deadlier still?
Too much? Make woman pure, and wild Love tame,
Or let me cry for ever on their shame!

[*He goes off in fury to the left.* PHAEDRA *still cowering in her place begins to sob.*

PHAEDRA.

Sad, sad and evil-starred
Is Woman's state.
What shelter now is left or guard?
What spell to loose the iron knot of fate?

And this thing, O my God,
O thou sweet Sunlight, is but my desert!
I cannot fly before the avenging rod
Falls, cannot hide my hurt.
What help, O ye who love me, can come near,
What god or man appear,
To aid a thing so evil and so lost?
Lost, for this anguish presses, soon or late,
To that swift river that no life hath crossed.
No woman ever lived so desolate!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Ah me, the time for deeds is gone; the boast
Proved vain that spake thine handmaid; and all lost!

[*At these words* PHAEDRA *suddenly remembers the* NURSE, *who is cowering silently where* HIPPOLYTUS *had thrown her from him. She turns upon her.*

PHAEDRA.

O wicked, wicked, wicked! Murderess heart
To them that loved thee! Hast thou played thy part?
Am I enough trod down?
May Zeus, my sire,
Blast and uproot thee! Stab thee dead with fire!
Said I not—Knew I not thine heart?—to name
To no one soul this that is now my shame?
And thou couldst not be silent! So no more
I die in honour. But enough; a store
Of new words must be spoke and new things thought.
This man's whole being to one blade is wrought
Of rage against me. Even now he speeds
To abase me to the King with thy misdeeds;

Tell Pittheus; fill the land with talk of sin!
Cursèd be thou, and whoso else leaps in
To bring bad aid to friends that want it not.

[*The* NURSE *has raised herself, and faces* PHAEDRA, *downcast but calm.*

NURSE.

Mistress, thou blamest me; and all thy lot
So bitter sore is, and the sting so wild,
I bear with all. Yet, if I would, my Child,
I have mine answer, couldst thou hearken aught.
I nursed thee, and I love thee; and I sought
Only some balm to heal thy deep despair,
And found—not what I sought for. Else I were
Wise, and thy friend, and good, had all sped right.
So fares it with us all in the world's sight.

PHAEDRA.

First stab me to the heart, then humour me
With words! 'Tis fair; 'tis all as it should be!

NURSE.

We talk too long, Child. I did ill; but, oh,
There is a way to save thee, even so!

PHAEDRA.

A way? No more ways! One way hast thou trod
Already, foul and false and loathed of god!
Begone out of my sight; and ponder how
Thine own life stands! I need no helpers now.

[*She turns from the* NURSE, *who creeps abashed away into the Castle.*

Only do ye, high Daughters of Trozên,
Let all ye hear be as it had not been;
Know naught, and speak of naught! 'Tis my last prayer.

LEADER.

By God's pure daughter, Artemis, I swear,
No word will I of these thy griefs reveal!

PHAEDRA.

'Tis well. But now, yea, even while I reel
And falter, one poor hope, as hope now is,
I clutch at in this coil of miseries;
To save some honour for my children's sake;
Yea, for myself some fragment, though things break
In ruin around me. Nay, I will not shame
The old proud Cretan castle whence I came,
I will not cower before King Theseus' eyes,
Abased, for want of one life's sacrifice!

LEADER.

What wilt thou? Some dire deed beyond recall?

PHAEDRA (*musing*).

Die; but how die?

LEADER.

Let not such wild words fall!

PHAEDRA (*turning upon her*).

Give thou not such light counsel! Let me be
To sate the Cyprian that is murdering me!
To-day shall be her day; and, all strife past,
Her bitter Love shall quell me at the last.

Yet, dying, shall I die another's bane!
He shall not stand so proud where I have lain
Bent in the dust! Oh, he shall stoop to share
The life I live in, and learn mercy there!

[*She goes off wildly into the Castle.*

CHORUS.

Could I take me to some cavern for mine hiding,
In the hill-tops where the Sun scarce hath trod;
Or a cloud make the home of mine abiding,
As a bird among the bird-droves of God!
Could I wing me to my rest amid the roar
Of the deep Adriatic on the shore,
Where the waters of Eridanus are clear,
And Phaëthon's sad sisters by his grave
Weep into the river, and each tear
Gleams, a drop of amber, in the wave.

To the strand of the Daughters of the Sunset,
The Apple-tree, the singing and the gold;
Where the mariner must stay him from his onset,
And the red wave is tranquil as of old;
Yea, beyond that Pillar of the End
That Atlas guardeth, would I wend;
Where a voice of living waters never ceaseth
In God's quiet garden by the sea,
And Earth, the ancient life-giver, increaseth
Joy among the meadows, like a tree.

O shallop of Crete, whose milk-white wing
Through the swell and the storm-beating,

Bore us thy Prince's daughter,
Was it well she came from a joyous home
To a far King's bridal across the foam?
What joy hath her bridal brought her?
Sure some spell upon either hand
Flew with thee from the Cretan strand,
Seeking Athena's tower divine;
And there, where Munychus fronts the brine,
Crept by the shore-flung cables' line,
The curse from the Cretan water!

And, for that dark spell that about her clings,
Sick desires of forbidden things
The soul of her rend and sever;
The bitter tide of calamity
Hath risen above her lips; and she,
Where bends she her last endeavour?
She will hie her alone to her bridal room,
And a rope swing slow in the rafters' gloom;
And a fair white neck shall creep to the noose,
A-shudder with dread, yet firm to choose
The one strait way for fame, and lose
The Love and the pain for ever.

[*The Voice of the* NURSE *is heard from within, crying, at first inarticulately, then clearly.*

VOICE.

Help ho! The Queen! Help, whoso hearkeneth!
Help! Theseus' spouse caught in a noose of death!

A WOMAN.

God, is it so soon finished? That bright head
Swinging beneath the rafters! Phaedra dead!

VOICE.

O haste! This knot about her throat is made
So fast! Will no one bring me a swift blade?

A WOMAN.

Say, friends, what think ye? Should we haste within,
And from her own hand's knotting loose the Queen?

ANOTHER.

Nay, are there not men there? 'Tis an ill road
In life, to finger at another's load.

VOICE.

Let it lie straight! Alas! the cold white thing
That guards his empty castle for the King!

A WOMAN.

Ah! 'Let it lie straight!' Heard ye what she said?
No need for helpers now; the Queen is dead!

[*The Women, intent upon the voices from the Castle, have not noticed the approach of* THESEUS. *He enters from the left; his dress and the garland on his head show that he has returned from some oracle or special abode of a God. He stands for a moment perplexed.*

THESEUS.

Ho, Women, and what means this loud acclaim
Within the house? The vassals' outcry came
To smite mine ears far off. It were more meet
To fling out wide the Castle gates, and greet

With joy a herald from God's Presence!

[*The confusion and horror of the Women's faces gradually affects him. A dirge-cry comes from the Castle.*

How?

Not Pittheus? Hath Time struck that hoary brow?
Old is he, old, I know. But sore it were,
Returning thus, to find his empty chair!

[*The Women hesitate; then the Leader comes forward.*

LEADER.

O Theseus, not on any old man's head
This stroke falls. Young and tender is the dead.

THESEUS.

Ye Gods! One of my children torn from me?

LEADER.

Thy motherless children live, most grievously.

THESEUS.

How sayst thou? What? My wife? . . .
Say how she died.

LEADER.

In a high death-knot that her own hands tied.

THESEUS.

A fit of the old cold anguish—Tell me all—
That held her? Or did some fresh thing befall?

LEADER.

We know no more. But now arrived we be,
Theseus, to mourn for thy calamity.

[THESEUS *stays for a moment silent, and puts his hand to his brow. He notices the wreath.*

THESEUS.

What? And all garlanded I come to her
With flowers, most evil-starred God's-messenger!
Ho, varlets, loose the portal bars; undo
The bolts; and let me see the bitter view
Of her whose death hath brought me to mine own.

[*The great central door of the Castle is thrown open wide, and the body of* PHAEDRA *is seen lying on a bier, surrounded by a group of Handmaids, wailing.*

THE HANDMAIDS.

Ah me, what thou hast suffered and hast done:
A deed to wrap this roof in flame!
Why was thine hand so strong, thine heart so bold?
Wherefore, O dead in anger, dead in shame,
The long, long wrestling ere thy breath was cold?
O ill-starred Wife,
What brought this blackness over all thy life?

[*A throng of Men and Women has gradually collected.*

THESEUS.

Ah me, this is the last
—Hear, O my countrymen!—and bitterest
Of Theseus' labours! Fortune all unblest,
How hath thine heavy heel across me passed!
Is it the stain of sins done long ago,
Some fell God still remembereth,
That must so dim and fret my life with death?
I cannot win to shore; and the waves flow

Above mine eyes, to be surmounted not.
Ah wife, sweet wife, what name
Can fit thine heavy lot?
Gone like a wild bird, like a blowing flame,
In one swift gust, where all things are forgot!
Alas! this misery!
Sure 'tis some stroke of God's great anger rolled
From age to age on me,
For some dire sin wrought by dim kings of old.

LEADER.

Sire, this great grief hath come to many an one,
A true wife lost. Thou art not all alone.

THESEUS.

Deep, deep beneath the Earth,
Dark may my dwelling be,
And Night my heart's one comrade, in the dearth,
O Love, of thy most sweet society.
This is my death, O Phaedra, more than thine.
[*He turns suddenly on the Attendants.*
Speak who speak can? What was it? What malign
Swift stroke, O heart discounselled, leapt on thee?
[*He bends over* PHAEDRA; *then, as no one speaks, looks fiercely up.*
What, will ye speak? Or are they dumb as death,
This herd of thralls, my high house harboureth?
[*There is no answer. He bends again over* PHAEDRA.
Ah me, why shouldst thou die?
A wide and royal grief I here behold,
Not to be borne in peace, not to be told.
As a lost man am I,

My children motherless and my house undone,
Since thou art vanished quite,
Purest of hearts that e'er the wandering Sun
Touched, or the star-eyed splendour of the Night.

[*He throws himself beside the body.*

CHORUS.

Unhappy one, O most unhappy one;
With what strange evil is this Castle vexed!
Mine eyes are molten with the tears that run
For thee and thine; but what thing follows next?
I tremble when I think thereon!

[*They have noticed that there is a tablet with writing fastened to the dead woman's wrist.* THESEUS *also sees it.*

THESEUS.

Ha, what is this that hangs from her dear hand?
A tablet! It would make me understand
Some dying wish, some charge about her bed
And children. 'Twas the last prayer, ere her head
Was bowed for ever. [*Taking the tablet.*
Fear not, my lost bride,
No woman born shall lie at Theseus' side,
Nor rule in Theseus' house!
A seal! Ah, see
How her gold signet here looks up at me,
Trustfully. Let me tear this thread away,
And read what tale the tablet seeks to say.

[*He proceeds to undo and read the tablet. The Chorus breaks into horrified groups.*

SOME WOMEN.

Woe, woe! God brings to birth
A new grief here, close on the other's tread!
My life hath lost its worth.
May all go now with what is finishèd!
The castle of my King is overthrown,
A house no more, a house vanished and gone!

OTHER WOMEN.

O God, if it may be in any way,
Let not this house be wrecked! Help us who pray!
I know not what is here: some unseen thing
That shows the Bird of Evil on the wing.

[THESEUS *has read the tablet and breaks out in uncontrollable emotion.*

THESEUS.

Oh, horror piled on horror!—Here is writ . . .
Nay, who could bear it, who could speak of it?

LEADER.

What, O my King? If I may hear it, speak!

THESEUS.

Doth not the tablet cry aloud, yea, shriek,
Things not to be forgotten?—Oh, to fly
And hide mine head! No more a man am I.
Ah, God, what ghastly music echoes here!

LEADER.

How wild thy voice! Some terrible thing is near.

THESEUS.

No ; my lips' gates will hold it back no more ;
This deadly word,
That struggles on the brink and will not o'er,
Yet will not stay unheard.
[*He raises his hand, to make proclamation to all present.*
Ho, hearken all this land !
[*The people gather expectantly about him.*
Hippolytus by violence hath laid hand
On this my wife, forgetting God's great eye.
[*Murmurs of amazement and horror ;* THESEUS,
apparently calm, raises both arms to heaven.
Therefore, O Thou my Father, hear my cry,
Poseidon ! Thou didst grant me for mine own
Three prayers ; for one of these, slay now my son,
Hippolytus ; let him not outlive this day,
If true thy promise was ! Lo, thus I pray.

LEADER.

Oh, call that wild prayer back ! O King, take heed !
I know that thou wilt live to rue this deed.

THESEUS.

It may not be.—And more, I cast him out
From all my realms. He shall be held about
By two great dooms. Or by Poseidon's breath
He shall fall swiftly to the house of Death ;
Or wandering, outcast, o'er strange land and sea,
Shall live and drain the cup of misery.

LEADER.

Ah, see ! here comes he at the point of need.
Shake off that evil mood, O King : have heed

For all thine house and folk.—Great Theseus, hear!

[THESEUS *stands silent in fierce gloom.* HIPPOLYTUS *comes in from the right.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

Father, I heard thy cry, and sped in fear
To help thee.—But I see not yet the cause
That racked thee so.—Say, Father, what it was.

[*The murmurs in the crowd, the silent gloom of his Father, and the horror of the Chorus-women gradually work on* HIPPOLYTUS *and bewilder him. He catches sight of the bier.*

Ah, what is that! Nay, Father, not the Queen
Dead! (*Murmurs in the crowd.*)
'Tis most strange. 'Tis passing strange, I ween.
'Twas here I left her. Scarce an hour hath run
Since here she stood and looked on this same sun.
What is it with her? Wherefore did she die?

[THESEUS *remains silent. The murmurs increase.*

Father, to thee I speak. Oh, tell me, why,
Why art thou silent? What doth silence know
Of skill to stem the bitter flood of woe?
And human hearts in sorrow crave the more
For knowledge, though the knowledge grieve them sore.
It is not love, to veil thy sorrows in
From one most near to thee, and more than kin

THESEUS (*to himself*).

Fond race of men, so striving and so blind,
Ten thousand arts and wisdoms can ye find,
Desiring all and all imagining:
But ne'er have reached nor understood one thing,
To make a true heart there where no heart is!

HIPPOLYTUS.

That were indeed beyond man's mysteries,
To make a false heart true against his will.
But why this subtle talk? It likes me ill,
Father; thy speech runs wild beneath this blow.

THESEUS (*as before*).

O would that God had given us here below
Some test of love, some sifting of the soul,
To tell the false and true! Or through the whole
Of men two voices ran, one true and right,
The other as chance willed it; that we might
Convict the liar by the true man's tone,
And not live duped forever, every one!

HIPPOLYTUS (*misunderstanding him; then guessing at something of the truth*).

What? Hath some friend proved false?
Or in thine ear
Whispered some slander? Stand I tainted here,
Though utterly innocent? [*Murmurs from the crowd.*
Yea, dazed am I;
'Tis thy words daze me, falling all awry,
Away from reason, by fell fancies vexed!

THESEUS.

O heart of man, what height wilt venture next?
What end comes to thy daring and thy crime?
For if with each man's life 'twill higher climb,
And every age break out in blood and lies
Beyond its fathers, must not God devise
Some new world far from ours, to hold therein
Such brood of all unfaithfulness and sin?

Look, all, upon this man, my son, his life
Sprung forth from mine! He hath defiled my wife;
And standeth here convicted by the dead,
A most black villain!

[HIPPOLYTUS *falls back with a cry and covers his face with his robe.*

Nay, hide not thine head!
Pollution, is it? Thee it will not stain.
Look up, and face thy Father's eyes again!
Thou friend of Gods, of all mankind elect;
Thou the pure heart, by thoughts of ill unflecked!
I care not for thy boasts. I am not mad,
To deem that Gods love best the base and bad.
Now is thy day! Now vaunt thee; thou so pure,
No flesh of life may pass thy lips! Now lure
Fools after thee; call Orpheus King and Lord;
Make ecstasies and wonders! Thumb thine hoard
Of ancient scrolls and ghostly mysteries—
Now thou art caught and known!
Shun men like these,
I charge ye all! With solemn words they chase
Their prey, and in their hearts plot foul disgrace.
My wife is dead.—'Ha, so that saves thee now?'
That is what grips thee worst, thou caitiff, thou!
What oaths, what subtle words, shall stronger be
Than this dead hand, to clear the guilt from thee?
'She hated thee,' thou sayest; 'the bastard born
Is ever sore and bitter as a thorn
To the true brood.'—A sorry bargainer
In the ills and goods of life thou makest her,
If all her best-beloved she cast away
To wreak blind hate on thee!—What, wilt thou say,

'Through every woman's nature one blind strand
Of passion winds, that men scarce understand?'—
Are we so different? Know I not the fire
And perilous flood of a young man's desire,
Desperate as any woman, and as blind,
When Cypris stings? Save that the man behind
Has all men's strength to aid him. Nay, 'twas thou . . .
But what avail to wrangle with thee now,
When the dead speaks for all to understand,
A perfect witness!
Hie thee from this land
To exile with all speed. Come never more
To god-built Athens, not to the utmost shore
Of any realm where Theseus' arm is strong!
What? Shall I bow my head beneath this wrong,
And cower to thee? Not Isthmian Sinis so
Will bear men witness that I laid him low,
Nor Skiron's rocks, that share the salt sea's prey,
Grant that my hand hath weight vile things to slay!

LEADER.

Alas! whom shall I call of mortal men
Happy? The highest are cast down again.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Father, the hot strained fury of thy heart
Is terrible. Yet, albeit so swift thou art
Of speech, if all this matter were laid bare,
Speech were not then so swift; nay, nor so fair. . .
[*Murmurs again in the crowd.*
I have no skill before a crowd to tell
My thoughts. 'Twere best with few, that know me well.—

Nay, that is natural; tongues that sound but rude
In wise men's ears, speak to the multitude
With music.
None the less, since there is come
This stroke upon me, I must not be dumb,
But speak perforce. . . . And there will I begin
Where thou beganst, as though to strip my sin
Naked, and I not speak a word!
Dost see
This sunlight and this earth? I swear to thee
There dwelleth not in these one man—deny
All that thou wilt!—more pure of sin than I.
Two things I know on earth: God's worship first;
Next to win friends about me, few, that thirst
To hold them clean of all unrighteousness.
Our rule doth curse the tempters, and no less
Who yieldeth to the tempters.—How, thou say'st,
'Dupes that I jest at?' Nay; I make a jest
Of no man. I am honest to the end,
Near or far off, with him I call my friend.
And most in that one thing, where now thy mesh
Would grip me, stainless quite! No woman's flesh
Hath e'er this body touched. Of all such deed
Naught wot I, save what things a man may read
In pictures or hear spoke; nor am I fain,
Being virgin-souled, to read or hear again.
My life of innocence moves thee not; so be it.
Show then what hath seduced me; let me see it.
Was that poor flesh so passing fair, beyond
All women's loveliness?
Was I some fond
False plotter, that I schemed to win through her
Thy castle's heirdom? Fond indeed I were!

Nay, a stark madman! 'But a crown,' thou sayst,
'Usurped, is sweet.' Nay, rather most unblest
To all wise-hearted; sweet to fools and them
Whose eyes are blinded by the diadem.
In contests of all valour fain would I
Lead Hellas; but in rank and majesty
Not lead, but be at ease, with good men near
To love me, free to work and not to fear.
That brings more joy than any crown or throne.

[*He sees from the demeanour of* THESEUS *and of the crowd that his words are not winning them, but rather making them bitterer than before. It comes to his lips to speak the whole truth.*

I have said my say; save one thing . . . one alone.
O had I here some witness in my need,
As I was witness! Could she hear me plead,
Face me and face the sunlight; well I know,
Our deeds would search us out for thee, and show
Who lies!
But now, I swear—so hear me both,
The Earth beneath and Zeus who Guards the Oath—
I never touched this woman that was thine!
No words could win me to it, nor incline
My heart to dream it. May God strike me down,
Nameless and fameless, without home or town,
An outcast and a wanderer of the world;
May my dead bones rest never, but be hurled
From sea to land, from land to angry sea,
If evil is my heart and false to thee!

[*He waits a moment; but sees that his Father is unmoved. The truth again comes to his lips.*

If 'twas some fear that made her cast away
Her life . . . I know not. More I must not say.
Right hath she done when in her was no right;
And Right I follow to mine own despite!

LEADER.

It is enough! God's name is witness large,
And thy great oath, to assoil thee of this charge.

THESEUS.

Is not the man a juggler and a mage,
Cool wits and one right oath — what more? — to assuage
Sin and the wrath of injured fatherhood!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Am I so cool? Nay, Father, 'tis thy mood
That makes me marvel! By my faith, wert thou
The son, and I the sire; and deemed I now
In very truth thou hadst my wife assailed,
I had not exiled thee, nor stood and railed,
But lifted once mine arm, and struck thee dead!

THESEUS.

Thou gentle judge! Thou shalt not so be sped
To simple death, nor by thine own decree.
Swift death is bliss to men in misery.
Far off, friendless forever, thou shalt drain
Amid strange cities the last dregs of pain!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Wilt verily cast me now beyond thy pale,
Not wait for Time, the lifter of the veil?

THESEUS.

Aye, if I could, past Pontus, and the red
Atlantic marge! So do I hate thine head.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Wilt weigh nor oath nor faith nor prophet's word
To prove me? Drive me from thy sight unheard?

THESEUS.

This tablet here, that needs no prophet's lot
To speak from, tells me all. I ponder not
Thy fowls that fly above us! Let them fly.

HIPPOLYTUS.

O ye great Gods, wherefore unlock not I
My lips, ere yet ye have slain me utterly,
Ye whom I love most? No. It may not be!
The one heart that I need I ne'er should gain
To trust me. I should break mine oath in vain.

THESEUS.

Death! but he chokes me with his saintly tone!—
Up, get thee from this land! Begone! Begone!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Where shall I turn me? Think. To what friend's door
Betake me, banished on a charge so sore?

THESEUS.

Whoso delights to welcome to his hall
Vile ravishers . . . to guard his hearth withal!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Thou seekst my heart, my tears? Aye, let it be
Thus! I am vile to all men, and to thee!

THESEUS.

There was a time for tears and thought; the time
Ere thou didst up and gird thee to thy crime.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ye stones, will ye not speak? Ye castle walls!
Bear witness if I be so vile, so false!

THESEUS.

Aye, fly to voiceless witnesses! Yet here
A dumb deed speaks against thee, and speaks clear!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Alas!
Would I could stand and watch this thing, and see
My face, and weep for very pity of me!

THESEUS.

Full of thyself, as ever! Not a thought
For them that gave thee birth; nay, they are naught!

HIPPOLYTUS.

O my wronged Mother! O my birth of shame!
May none I love e'er bear a bastard's name!

THESEUS (*in a sudden blaze of rage*).

Up, thralls, and drag him from my presence! What?
'Tis but a foreign felon! Heard ye not?
[*The thralls still hesitate in spite of his fury.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

They touch me at their peril! Thine own hand
Lift, if thou canst, to drive me from the land.

THESEUS.

That will I straight, unless my will be done!

[HIPPOLYTUS *comes close to him and kneels.*

Nay! Not for thee my pity! Get thee gone!

[HIPPOLYTUS *rises, makes a sign of submission, and slowly moves away.* THESEUS, *as soon as he sees him going, turns rapidly and enters the Castle. The door is closed again.* HIPPOLYTUS *has stopped for a moment before the Statue of* ARTEMIS, *and, as* THESEUS *departs, breaks out in prayer.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

So; it is done! O dark and miserable!
I see it all, but see not how to tell
The tale.—O thou belovèd, Leto's Maid,
Chase-comrade, fellow-rester in the glade,
Lo, I am driven with a caitiff's brand
Forth from great Athens! Fare ye well, O land
And city of old Erechtheus! Thou, Trozên,
What riches of glad youth mine eyes have seen
In thy broad plain! Farewell! This is the end;
The last word, the last look!
Come, every friend
And fellow of my youth that still may stay,
Give me god-speed and cheer me on my way.

Ne'er shall ye see a man more pure of spot
Than me, though mine own Father loves me not!

[HIPPOLYTUS *goes away to the right, followed by many Huntsmen and other young men. The rest of the crowd has by this time dispersed, except the Women of the Chorus and some Men of the Chorus of Huntsmen.*

CHORUS.

Men.

Surely the thought of the Gods hath balm in it alway, to win me
Far from my griefs; and a thought, deep in the dark of my mind,
Clings to a great Understanding. Yet all the spirit within me
Faints, when I watch men's deeds matched with the guerdon they find.

For Good comes in Evil's traces,
And the Evil the Good replaces;
And Life, 'mid the changing faces,
Wandereth weak and blind.

Women.

What wilt thou grant me, O God? Lo, this is the prayer of my travail—
Some well-being; and chance not very bitter thereby;
A Spirit uncrippled by pain; and a mind not deep to unravel
Truth unseen, nor yet dark with the brand of a lie.

With a veering mood to borrow
Its light from every morrow,
Fair friends and no deep sorrow,
Well could man live and die!

Men.

Yet my spirit is no more clean,
And the weft of my hope is torn,
For the deed of wrong that mine eyes have seen,
The lie and the rage and the scorn;
A Star among men, yea, a Star
That in Hellas was bright,
By a Father's wrath driven far
To the wilds and the night.
Oh, alas for the sands of the shore!
Alas for the brakes of the hill,
Where the wolves shall fear thee no more,
And thy cry to Dictynna is still!

Women.

No more in the yoke of thy car
Shall the colts of Enetia fleet;
Nor Limna's echoes quiver afar
To the clatter of galloping feet.
The sleepless music of old,
That leaped in the lyre,
Ceaseth now, and is cold,
In the halls of thy sire.
The bowers are discrowned and unladen
Where Artemis lay on the lea;
And the love-dream of many a maiden
Lost, in the losing of thee

A Maiden.

And I, even I,
For thy fall, O Friend,
Amid tears and tears,
Endure to the end
Of the empty years,
Of a life run dry.
In vain didst thou bear him,
Thou Mother forlorn!
Ye Gods that did snare him,
Lo, I cast in your faces
My hate and my scorn!
Ye love-linkèd Graces,
(Alas for the day!)
Was he naught, then, to you,
That ye cast him away,
The stainless and true,
From the old happy places?

LEADER.

Look yonder! Surely from the Prince 'tis one
That cometh, full of haste and woe-begone.

[A HENCHMAN *enters in haste.*

HENCHMAN.

Ye women, whither shall I go to seek
King Theseus? Is he in this dwelling? Speak!

LEADER.

Lo, where he cometh through the Castle gate!

[THESEUS *comes out from the Castle.*

HENCHMAN.

O King, I bear thee tidings of dire weight
To thee, aye, and to every man, I ween,
From Athens to the marches of Trozên.

THESEUS.

What? Some new stroke hath touched, unknown to me,
The sister cities of my sovranty?

HENCHMAN.

Hippolytus is . . . Nay, not dead; but stark
Outstretched, a hairsbreadth this side of the dark.

THESEUS (*as though unmoved*).

How slain? Was there some other man, whose wife
He had like mine defiled, that sought his life?

HENCHMAN.

His own wild team destroyed him, and the dire
Curse of thy lips.
The boon of thy great Sire
Is granted thee, O King, and thy son slain.

THESEUS.

Ye Gods! And thou, Poseidon! Not in vain
I called thee Father; thou hast heard my prayer!
How did he die? Speak on. How closed the snare
Of Heaven to slay the shamer of my blood?

HENCHMAN.

'Twas by the bank of beating sea we stood,
We thralls, and decked the steeds, and combed each
mane;

Weeping; for word had come that ne'er again
The foot of our Hippolytus should roam
This land, but waste in exile by thy doom.
So stood we till he came, and in his tone
No music now save sorrow's, like our own,
And in his train a concourse without end
Of many a chase-fellow and many a friend.
At last he brushed his sobs away, and spake:
'Why this fond loitering? I would not break
My Father's law.—Ho, there! My coursers four
And chariot, quick! This land is mine no more.'
Thereat, be sure, each man of us made speed.
Swifter than speech we brought them up, each steed
Well dight and shining, at our Prince's side.
He grasped the reins upon the rail: one stride
And there he stood, a perfect charioteer,
Each foot in its own station set. Then clear
His voice rose, and his arms to heaven were spread:
'O Zeus, if I be false, strike thou me dead!
But, dead or living, let my Father see
One day, how falsely he hath hated me!'
Even as he spake, he lifted up the goad
And smote; and the steeds sprang. And down the road
We henchmen followed, hard beside the rein,
Each hand, to speed him, toward the Argive plain
And Epidaurus.
So we made our way
Up toward the desert region, where the bay
Curls to a promontory near the verge
Of our Trozên, facing the southward surge
Of Saron's gulf. Just there an angry sound,
Slow-swelling, like God's thunder underground,

Broke on us, and we trembled. And the steeds
Pricked their ears skyward, and threw back their heads.
And wonder came on all men, and affright,
Whence rose that awful voice. And swift our sight
Turned seaward, down the salt and roaring sand.
And there, above the horizon, seemed to stand
A wave unearthly, crested in the sky;
Till Skiron's Cape first vanished from mine eye,
Then sank the Isthmus hidden, then the rock
Of Epidaurus. Then it broke, one shock
And roar of gasping sea and spray flung far,
And shoreward swept, where stood the Prince's car.
Three lines of wave together raced, and, full
In the white crest of them, a wild Sea-Bull
Flung to the shore, a fell and marvellous Thing.
The whole land held his voice, and answering
Roared in each echo. And all we, gazing there,
Gazed seeing not; 'twas more than eyes could bear.
Then straight upon the team wild terror fell.
Howbeit, the Prince, cool-eyed and knowing well
Each changing mood a horse has, gripped the reins
Hard in both hands; then as an oarsman strains
Up from his bench, so strained he on the thong,
Back in the chariot swinging. But the young
Wild steeds bit hard the curb, and fled afar;
Nor rein nor guiding hand nor morticed car
Stayed them at all. For when he veered them round,
And aimed their flying feet to grassy ground,
In front uprose that Thing, and turned again
The four great coursers, terror-mad. But when
Their blind rage drove them toward the rocky places,
Silent, and ever nearer to the traces,
It followed, rockward, till one wheel-edge grazed.

The chariot tript and flew, and all was mazed
In turmoil. Up went wheel-box with a din,
Where the rock jagged, and nave and axle-pin.
And there—the long reins round him—there was he
Dragging, entangled irretrievably.
A dear head battering at the chariot side,
Sharp rocks, and ripped flesh, and a voice that cried:
'Stay, stay, O ye who fattened at my stalls,
Dash me not into nothing!—O thou false
Curse of my Father!—Help! Help, whoso can,
An innocent, innocent and stainless man!'
Many there were that laboured then, I wot,
To bear him succour, but could reach him not,
Till—who knows how?—at last the tangled rein
Unclasped him, and he fell, some little vein
Of life still pulsing in him.
All beside,
The steeds, the hornèd Horror of the Tide,
Had vanished—who knows where?—in that wild land
O King, I am a bondsman of thine hand;
Yet love nor fear nor duty me shall win
To say thine innocent son hath died in sin.
All women born may hang themselves, for me,
And swing their dying words from every tree
On Ida! For I know that he was true!

LEADER.

O God, so cometh new disaster, new
Despair! And no escape from what must be!

THESEUS.

Hate of the man thus stricken lifted me
At first to joy at hearing of thy tale;
But now, some shame before the Gods, some pale

Pity for mine own blood, hath o'er me come.
I laugh not, neither weep, at this fell doom.

HENCHMAN.

How then? Behoves it bear him here, or how
Best do thy pleasure?—Speak, Lord. Yet if thou
Wilt mark at all my word, thou wilt not be
Fierce-hearted to thy child in misery.

THESEUS.

Aye, bring him hither. Let me see the face
Of him who durst deny my deep disgrace
And his own sin; yea, speak with him, and prove
His clear guilt by God's judgments from above.

[*The* HENCHMAN *departs to fetch* HIPPOLYTUS; THESEUS *sits waiting in stern gloom, while the* CHORUS *sing. At the close of their song a Divine Figure is seen approaching on a cloud in the air and the voice of* ARTEMIS *speaks.*

CHORUS.

Thou comest to bend the pride
Of the hearts of God and man,
Cypris; and by thy side,
In earth-encircling span,
He of the changing plumes,
The Wing that the world illumes,
As over the leagues of land flies he,
Over the salt and sounding sea.

For mad is the heart of Love,
And gold the gleam of his wing;
And all to the spell thereof
Bend, when he makes his spring;

All life that is wild and young
In mountain and wave and stream,
All that of earth is sprung,
Or breathes in the red sunbeam;
Yea, and Mankind. O'er all a royal throne,
Cyprian, Cyprian, is thine alone!

A Voice from the Cloud.

O thou that rulest in Aegeus' Hall,
I charge thee, hearken!
Yea, it is I,
Artemis, Virgin of God most High.
Thou bitter King, art thou glad withal
For thy murdered son?
For thine ear bent low to a lying Queen,
For thine heart so swift amid things unseen?
Lo, all may see what end thou hast won!
Go, sink thine head in the waste abyss;
Or aloft to another world than this,
Birdwise with wings,
Fly far to thine hiding,
Far over this blood that clots and clings;
For in righteous men and in holy things
No rest is thine nor abiding!

[*The cloud has become stationary in the air.*

Hear, Theseus, all the story of thy grief!
Verily, I bring but anguish, not relief;
Yet, 'twas for this I came, to show how high
And clean was thy son's heart, that he may die
Honoured of men; aye, and to tell no less
The frenzy, or in some sort the nobleness,

Of thy dead wife. One Spirit there is, whom we
That know the joy of white virginity,
Most hate in heaven. She sent her fire to run
In Phaedra's veins, so that she loved thy son.
Yet strove she long with love, and in the stress
Fell not, till by her Nurse's craftiness
Betrayed, who stole, with oaths of secrecy,
To entreat thy son. And he, most righteously,
Nor did her will, nor, when thy railing scorn
Beat on him, broke the oath that he had sworn,
For God's sake. And thy Phaedra, panic-eyed,
Wrote a false writ, and slew thy son, and died,
Lying; but thou wast nimble to believe!

[THESEUS, *at first bewildered, then dumbfoundered, now utters a deep groan.*

It stings thee, Theseus?—Nay, hear on, and grieve
Yet sorer. Wottest thou three prayers were thine
Of sure fulfilment, from thy Sire divine?
Hast thou no foes about thee, then, that one—
Thou vile King!—must be turned against thy son?
The deed was thine. Thy Sea-born Sire but heard
The call of prayer, and bowed him to his word.
But thou in his eyes and in mine art found
Evil, who wouldst not think, nor probe, nor sound
The deeps of prophet's lore, nor day by day
Leave Time to search; but, swifter than man may,
Let loose the curse to slay thine innocent son!

THESEUS.

O Goddess, let me die!

ARTEMIS.

Nay; thou hast done
A heavy wrong; yet even beyond this ill
Abides for thee forgiveness. 'Twas the will
Of Cypris that these evil things should be,
Sating her wrath. And this immutably
Hath Zeus ordained in heaven: no God may thwart
A God's fixed will; we grieve but stand apart.
Else, but for fear of the Great Father's blame,
Never had I to such extreme of shame
Bowed me, be sure, as here to stand and see
Slain him I loved best of mortality!
Thy fault, O King, its ignorance sunders wide
From very wickedness; and she who died
By death the more disarmed thee, making dumb
The voice of question. And the storm has come
Most bitterly of all on thee! Yet I
Have mine own sorrow, too. When good men die,
There is no joy in heaven, albeit our ire
On child and house of the evil falls like fire.

[*A throng is seen approaching;* HIPPOLYTUS *enters, supported by his attendants.*

CHORUS.

Lo, it is he! The bright young head
Yet upright there!
Ah, the torn flesh and the blood-stained hair;
Alas for the kindred's trouble!
It falls as fire from a God's hand sped,
Two deaths, and mourning double.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah, pain, pain, pain!
O unrighteous curse! O unrighteous sire!
No hope.—My head is stabbed with fire,
And a leaping spasm about my brain.
Stay, let me rest. I can no more.
O fell, fell steeds that my own hand fed,
Have ye maimed me and slain, that loved me of yore?
—Soft there, ye thralls! No trembling hands
As ye lift me, now!—Who is that that stands
At the right?—Now firm, and with measured tread,
Lift one accursèd and stricken sore
By a father's sinning.

Thou, Zeus, dost see me? Yea, it is I;
The proud and pure, the server of God,
The white and shining in sanctity!
To a visible death, to an open sod,
I walk my ways;
And all the labour of saintly days
Lost, lost, without meaning!

Ah God, it crawls
This agony, over me!
Let be, ye thralls!
Come, Death, and cover me;
Come, O thou Healer blest!

But a little more,
And my soul is clear,
And the anguish o'er!
Oh, a spear, a spear!
To rend my soul to its rest!

Oh, strange, false Curse! Was there some blood-
stained head,
Some father of my line, unpunishèd,
Whose guilt lived in his kin,
And passed, and slept, till after this long day
It lights. . . . Oh, why on me? Me, far away
And innocent of sin?

O words that cannot save!
When will this breathing end in that last deep
Pain that is painlessness? 'Tis sleep I crave.
When wilt thou bring me sleep,
Thou dark and midnight magic of the grave!

ARTEMIS.

Sore-stricken man, bethink thee in this stress,
Thou dost but die for thine own nobleness.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah!
O breath of heavenly fragrance! Though my pain
Burns, I can feel thee and find rest again.
The Goddess Artemis is with me here.

ARTEMIS.

With thee and loving thee, poor sufferer!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Dost see me, Mistress, nearing my last sleep?

ARTEMIS.

Aye, and would weep for thee, if Gods could weep.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Who now shall hunt with thee or hold thy quiver?

ARTEMIS.

He dies; but my love cleaves to him for ever.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Who guide thy chariot, keep thy shrine-flowers fresh?

ARTEMIS.

The accursèd Cyprian caught him in her mesh!

HIPPOLYTUS.

The Cyprian? Now I see it!—Aye, 'twas she.

ARTEMIS.

She missed her worship, loathed thy chastity!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Three lives by her one hand! 'Tis all clear now.

ARTEMIS.

Yea, three; thy father and his Queen and thou.

HIPPOLYTUS.

My father; yea, he too is pitiable!

ARTEMIS.

A plotting Goddess tripped him, and he fell.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Father, where art thou? . . . Oh, thou sufferest sore!

THESEUS.

Even unto death, child. There is joy no more.

HIPPOLYTUS.

I pity thee in this coil; aye, more than me.

THESEUS.

Would I could lie there dead instead of thee!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Oh, bitter bounty of Poseidon's love!

THESEUS.

Would God my lips had never breathed thereof!

HIPPOLYTUS (*gently*).

Nay, thine own rage had slain me then, some wise!

THESEUS.

A lying spirit had made blind mine eyes!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah me!
Would that a mortal's curse could reach to God!

ARTEMIS.

Let be! For not, though deep beneath the sod
Thou liest, not unrequited nor unsung
Shall this fell stroke, from Cypris' rancour sprung,
Quell thee, mine own, the saintly and the true!
My hand shall win its vengeance, through and through
Piercing with flawless shaft what heart soe'er
Of all men living is most dear to Her.
Yea, and to thee, for this sore travail's sake,
Honours most high in Trozên will I make;
For yokeless maids before their bridal night
Shall shear for thee their tresses; and a rite
Of honouring tears be thine in ceaseless store;

And virgins' thoughts in music evermore
Turn toward thee, and praise thee in the Song
Of Phaedra's far-famed love and thy great wrong.
O seed of ancient Aegeus, bend thee now
And clasp thy son. Aye, hold and fear not thou!
Not knowingly hast thou slain him; and man's way,
When Gods send error, needs must fall astray.
And thou, Hippolytus, shrink not from the King,
Thy father. Thou wast born to bear this thing.
Farewell! I may not watch man's fleeting breath,
Nor stain mine eyes with the effluence of death.
And sure that Terror now is very near.

[*The cloud slowly rises and floats away.*

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell, farewell, most Blessèd! Lift thee clear
Of soiling men! Thou wilt not grieve in heaven
For my long love! . . . Father, thou art forgiven.
It was Her will. I am not wroth with thee. . . .
I have obeyed Her all my days! . . .
Ah me,
The dark is drawing down upon mine eyes;
It hath me! . . . Father! . . . Hold me! Help me rise!

THESEUS (*supporting him in his arms*).

Ah, woe! How dost thou torture me, my son!

HIPPOLYTUS.

I see the Great Gates opening. I am gone.

THESEUS.

Gone? And my hand red-reeking from this thing!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Nay, nay; thou art assoiled of manslaying.

THESEUS.

Thou leav'st me clear of murder? Sayst thou so?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Yea, by the Virgin of the Stainless Bow!

THESEUS.

Dear Son! Ah, now I see thy nobleness!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Pray that a true-born child may fill my place.

THESEUS.

Ah me, thy righteous and godfearing heart!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell;
A long farewell, dear Father, ere we part!
[THESEUS *bends down and embraces him passionately.*

THESEUS.

Not yet!—O hope and bear while thou hast breath!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Lo, I have borne my burden. This is death. . . .
Quick, Father; lay the mantle on my face.
[THESEUS *covers his face with a mantle and rises.*

THESEUS.

Ye bounds of Pallas and of Pelops' race,
What greatness have ye lost!
Woe, woe is me!
Thou Cyprian, long shall I remember thee!

CHORUS.

On all this folk, both low and high,
A grief hath fallen beyond men's fears.
There cometh a throbbing of many tears,
A sound as of waters falling.
For when great men die,
A mighty name and a bitter cry
Rise up from a nation calling.

[*They move into the Castle, carrying the body of* HIPPOLYTUS.

THE BACCHAE

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

DIONYSUS, THE GOD; *son of Zeus and of the Theban princess Semelê.*

CADMUS, *formerly King of Thebes, father of Semelê.*

PENTHEUS, *King of Thebes, grandson of Cadmus.*

AGÂVÊ, *daughter of Cadmus, mother of Pentheus.*

TEIRESIAS, *an aged Theban prophet.*

A SOLDIER OF PENTHEUS' GUARD.

TWO MESSENGERS.

A CHORUS OF INSPIRED DAMSELS, *following Dionysus from the East.*

"*The play was first produced after the death of Euripides by his son, who bore the same name, together with the 'Iphigenîa in Aulis' and the 'Alcmaeon,' probably in the year* 405 B.C."

THE BACCHAE

The background represents the front of the Castle of PENTHEUS, *King of Thebes. At one side is visible the sacred Tomb of Semelê, a little enclosure overgrown with wild vines, with a cleft in the rocky floor of it from which there issues at times steam or smoke. The God* DIONYSUS *is discovered alone.*

DIONYSUS.

Behold, God's Son is come unto this land
Of Thebes, even I, Dionysus, whom the brand
Of heaven's hot splendour lit to life, when she
Who bore me, Cadmus' daughter Semelê,
Died here. So, changed in shape from God to man,
I walk again by Dirce's streams and scan

Ismenus' shore. There by the castle side
I see her place, the Tomb of the Lightning's Bride,
The wreck of smouldering chambers, and the great
Faint wreaths of fire undying—as the hate
Dies not, that Hera held for Semelê.
Aye, Cadmus hath done well; in purity
He keeps this place apart, inviolate,
His daughter's sanctuary; and I have set
My green and clustered vines to robe it round.
Far now behind me lies the golden ground
Of Lydian and of Phrygian; far away
The wide hot plains where Persian sunbeams play,
The Bactrian war-holds, and the storm-oppressed
Clime of the Mede, and Araby the Blest,
And Asia all, that by the salt sea lies
In proud embattled cities, motley-wise
Of Hellene and Barbarian interwrought;
And now I come to Hellas—having taught
All the world else my dances and my rite
Of mysteries, to show me in men's sight
Manifest God.
And first of Hellene lands
I cry this Thebes to waken; set her hands
To clasp my wand, mine ivied javelin,
And round her shoulders hang my wild fawn-skin.
For they have scorned me whom it least beseemed,
Semelê's sisters; mocked my birth, nor deemed
That Dionysus sprang from Dian seed.
My mother sinned, said they; and in her need,
With Cadmus plotting, cloaked her human shame
With the dread name of Zeus; for that the flame
From heaven consumed her, seeing she lied to God.
Thus must they vaunt; and therefore hath my rod

On them first fallen, and stung them forth wild-eyed
From empty chambers; the bare mountain side
Is made their home, and all their hearts are flame.
Yea, I have bound upon the necks of them
The harness of my rites. And with them all
The seed of womankind from hut and hall
Of Thebes, hath this my magic goaded out.
And there, with the old King's daughters, in a rout
Confused, they make their dwelling-place between
The roofless rocks and shadowy pine trees green.
Thus shall this Thebes, how sore soe'er it smart,
Learn and forget not, till she crave her part
In mine adoring; thus must I speak clear
To save my mother's fame, and crown me here
As true God, born by Semelê to Zeus.

Now Cadmus yieldeth up his throne and use
Of royal honour to his daughter's son
Pentheus; who on my body hath begun
A war with God. He thrusteth me away
From due drink-offering, and, when men pray,
My name entreats not. Therefore on his own
Head and his people's shall my power be shown.
Then to another land, when all things here
Are well, must I fare onward, making clear
My godhead's might. But should this Theban town
Essay with wrath and battle to drag down
My maids, lo, in their path myself shall be,
And maniac armies battled after me!
For this I veil my godhead with the wan
Form of the things that die, and walk as Man.

O Brood of Tmolus o'er the wide world flown,
O Lydian band, my chosen and mine own,

Damsels uplifted o'er the orient deep
To wander where I wander, and to sleep
Where I sleep ; up, and wake the old sweet sound,
The clang that I and mystic Rhea found,
The Timbrel of the Mountain ! Gather all
Thebes to your song round Pentheus' royal hall.
I seek my new-made worshippers, to guide
Their dances up Kithaeron's pine-clad side.

[*As he departs, there comes stealing in from the left a band of fifteen Eastern Women, the light of the sunrise streaming upon their long white robes and ivy-bound hair. They wear fawn-skins over the robes, and carry some of them timbrels, some pipes and other instruments. Many bear the thyrsus, or sacred Wand, made of reed ringed with ivy. They enter stealthily till they see that the place is empty, and then begin their mystic song of worship.*

CHORUS.

A Maiden.

From Asia, from the dayspring that uprises,
To Bromios ever glorying we came.
We laboured for our Lord in many guises ;
We toiled, but the toil is as the prize is ;
Thou Mystery, we hail thee by thy name !

Another.

Who lingers in the road ? Who espies us ?
He shall hide him in his house nor be bold.
Let the heart keep silence that defies us ;
For I sing this day to Dionysus
The song that is appointed from of old.

All the Maidens.

Oh, blessèd he in all wise,
Who hath drunk the Living Fountain,
Whose life no folly staineth,
And his soul is near to God;
Whose sins are lifted, pall-wise,
As he worships on the Mountain,
And where Cybele ordaineth,
Our Mother, he has trod:

His head with ivy laden
And his thyrsus tossing high,
For our God he lifts his cry;
"Up, O Bacchae, wife and maiden,
Come, O ye Bacchae, come;
Oh, bring the Joy-bestower,
God-seed of God the Sower,
Bring Bromios in his power
From Phrygia's mountain dome;
To street and town and tower,
Oh, bring ye Bromios home!"

Whom erst in anguish lying
For an unborn life's desire,
As a dead thing in the Thunder
His mother cast to earth;
For her heart was dying, dying,
In the white heart of the fire;
Till Zeus, the Lord of Wonder,
Devised new lairs of birth;

Yea, his own flesh tore to hide him,
And with clasps of bitter gold
Did a secret son enfold,

And the Queen knew not beside him ;
Till the perfect hour was there ;
Then a hornèd God was found,
And a God with serpents crowned ;
And for that are serpents wound
In the wands his maidens bear,
And the songs of serpents sound
In the mazes of their hair.

Some Maidens.

All hail, O Thebes, thou nurse of Semelê !
With Semelê's wild ivy crown thy towers ;
Oh, burst in bloom of wreathing bryony,
Berries and leaves and flowers ;
Uplift the dark divine wand,
The oak-wand and the pine-wand,
And don thy fawn-skin, fringed in purity
With fleecy white, like ours.

Oh, cleanse thee in the wands' waving pride !
Yea, all men shall dance with us and pray,
When Bromios his companies shall guide
Hillward, ever hillward, where they stay,
The flock of the Believing,
The maids from loom and weaving
By the magic of his breath borne away.

Others.

Hail thou, O Nurse of Zeus, O Caverned Haunt
Where fierce arms clanged to guard God's cradle rare,
For thee of old some crested Corybant
First woke in Cretan air

The wild orb of our orgies,
Our Timbrel; and thy gorges
Rang with this strain; and blended Phrygian chant
And sweet keen pipes were there.

But the Timbrel, the Timbrel was another's,
And away to Mother Rhea it must wend;
And to our holy singing from the Mother's
The mad Satyrs carried it, to blend
In the dancing and the cheer
Of our third and perfect Year;
And it serves Dionysus in the end!

A Maiden.

O glad, glad on the mountains
To swoon in the race outworn,
When the holy fawn-skin clings,
And all else sweeps away,
To the joy of the red quick fountains,
The blood of the hill-goat torn,
The glory of wild-beast ravenings,
Where the hill-tops catch the day;
To the Phrygian, Lydian, mountains!
'Tis Bromios leads the way.

Another Maiden.

Then streams the earth with milk, yea, streams
With wine and nectar of the bee,
And through the air dim perfume steams
Of Syrian frankincense; and He,
Our leader, from his thyrsus spray
A torchlight tosses high and higher,
A torchlight like a beacon-fire,
To waken all that faint and stray;

And sets them leaping as he sings,
His tresses rippling to the sky,
And deep beneath the Maenad cry
His proud voice rings:
"Come, O ye Bacchae, come!"

All the Maidens.

Hither, O fragrant of Tmolus the Golden,
Come with the voice of timbrel and drum;
Let the cry of your joyance uplift and embolden
The God of the joy-cry; O Bacchanals, come!
With pealing of pipes and with Phrygian clamour,
On, where the vision of holiness thrills,
And the music climbs and the maddening glamour,
With the wild White Maids, to the hills, to the hills!
Oh, then, like a colt as he runs by a river,
A colt by his dam, when the heart of him sings,
With the keen limbs drawn and the fleet foot a-quiver,
Away the Bacchanal springs!

Enter TEIRESIAS. *He is an old man and blind, leaning upon a staff and moving with slow stateliness, though wearing the Ivy and the Bacchic fawn-skin.*

TEIRESIAS.

Ho, there, who keeps the gate?—Go, summon me
Cadmus, Agênor's son, who crossed the sea
From Sidon and upreared this Theban hold.
Go, whosoe'er thou art. See he be told
Teiresias seeketh him. Himself will gauge
Mine errand, and the compact, age with age,

I vowed with him, grey hair with snow-white hair,
To deck the new God's thyrsus, and to wear
His fawn-skin, and with ivy crown our brows.

Enter CADMUS *from the Castle. He is even older than* TEIRESIAS, *and wears the same attire.*

CADMUS.

True friend! I knew that voice of thine, that flows
Like mellow wisdom from a fountain wise.
And, lo, I come prepared, in all the guise
And harness of this God. Are we not told
His is the soul of that dead life of old
That sprang from mine own daughter? Surely then
Must thou and I with all the strength of men
Exalt him.
Where then shall I stand, where tread
The dance and toss this bowed and hoary head?
O friend, in thee is wisdom; guide my grey
And eld-worn steps, eld-worn Teiresias.—Nay;
I am not weak.

[*At the first movement of worship his manner begins to change; a mysterious strength and exaltation enter into him.*

Surely this arm could smite
The wild earth with its thyrsus, day and night,
And faint not! Sweetly and forgetfully
The dim years fall from off me!

TEIRESIAS.

As with thee,
With me 'tis likewise. Light am I and young,
And will essay the dancing and the song.

CADMUS.

Quick, then, our chariots to the mountain road.

TEIRESIAS.

Nay ; to take steeds were to mistrust the God.

CADMUS.

So be it. Mine old arm shall guide thee there.

TEIRESIAS.

The God himself shall guide ! Have thou no care.

CADMUS.

And in all Thebes shall no man dance but we ?

TEIRESIAS.

Aye, Thebes is blinded. Thou and I can see.

CADMUS.

'Tis weary waiting ; hold my hand, friend ; so.

TEIRESIAS.

Lo, there is mine. So linkèd let us go.

CADMUS.

Shall things of dust the Gods' dark ways despise ?

TEIRESIAS.

Or prove our wit on Heaven's high mysteries ?
Not thou and I ! That heritage sublime
Our sires have left us, wisdom old as time,
No word of man, how deep soe'er his thought
And won of subtlest toil, may bring to naught.

Aye, men will rail that I forget my years,
To dance and wreathe with ivy these white hairs;
What recks it? Seeing the God no line hath told
To mark what man shall dance, or young or old;
But craves his honours from mortality
All, no man marked apart; and great shall be!

CADMUS (*after looking away toward the Mountain*).

Teiresias, since this light thou canst not read,
I must be seer for thee. Here comes in speed
Pentheus, Echîon's son, whom I have raised
To rule my people in my stead.—Amazed
He seems. Stand close, and mark what we shall hear.

[*The two stand back, partially concealed, while there enters in hot haste* PENTHEUS, *followed by a bodyguard. He is speaking to the* SOLDIER *in command.*

PENTHEUS.

Scarce had I crossed our borders, when mine ear
Was caught by this strange rumour, that our own
Wives, our own sisters, from their hearths are flown
To wild and secret rites; and cluster there
High on the shadowy hills, with dance and prayer
To adore this new-made God, this Dionyse,
Whate'er he be!—And in their companies
Deep wine-jars stand, and ever and anon
Away into the loneliness now one
Steals forth, and now a second, maid or dame,
Where love lies waiting, not of God! The flame,
They say, of Bacchios wraps them. Bacchios! Nay,
'Tis more to Aphrodite that they pray.

Howbeit, all that I have found, my men
Hold bound and shackled in our dungeon den;
The rest, I will go hunt them! Aye, and snare
My birds with nets of iron, to quell their prayer
And mountain song and rites of rascaldom!
They tell me, too, there is a stranger come,
A man of charm and spell, from Lydian seas,
A head all gold and cloudy fragrancies,
A wine-red cheek, and eyes that hold the light
Of the very Cyprian. Day and livelong night
He haunts amid the damsels, o'er each lip
Dangling his cup of joyance!—Let me grip
Him once, but once, within these walls, right swift
That wand shall cease its music, and that drift
Of tossing curls lie still—when my rude sword
Falls between neck and trunk! 'Tis all his word,
This tale of Dionysus; how that same
Babe that was blasted by the lightning flame
With his dead mother, for that mother's lie,
Was re-conceived, born perfect from the thigh
Of Zeus, and now is God! What call ye these?
Dreams? Gibes of the unknown wanderer? Blasphemies
That crave the very gibbet?
Stay! God wot,
Here is another marvel! See I not
In motley fawn-skins robed the vision-seer
Teiresias? And my mother's father here—
O depth of scorn!—adoring with the wand
Of Bacchios?—Father!—Nay, mine eyes are fond;
It is not your white heads so fancy-flown!
It cannot be! Cast off that ivy crown,

O mine own mother's sire! Set free that hand
That cowers about its staff.
'Tis thou hast planned
This work, Teiresias! 'Tis thou must set
Another altar and another yet
Amongst us, watch new birds, and win more hire
Of gold, interpreting new signs of fire!
But for thy silver hairs, I tell thee true,
Thou now wert sitting chained amid thy crew
Of raving damsels, for this evil dream
Thou hast brought us, of new Gods! When once
the gleam
Of grapes hath lit a Woman's Festival,
In all their prayers is no more health at all!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
(*the words are not heard by* PENTHEUS).

Injurious King, hast thou no care for God,
Nor Cadmus, sower of the Giants' Sod,
Life-spring to great Echîon and to thee?

TEIRESIAS.

Good words, my son, come easily, when he
That speaks is wise, and speaks but for the right.
Else come they never! Swift are thine, and bright
As though with thought, yet have no thought at all.
Lo, this new God, whom thou dost flout withal,
I cannot speak the greatness wherewith He
In Hellas shall be great! Two spirits there be,
Young Prince, that in man's world are first of worth.
Dêmêtêr one is named; she is the Earth—
Call her which name thou will!—who feeds man's frame
With sustenance of things dry. And that which came

Her work to perfect, second, is the Power
From Semelê born. He found the liquid shower
Hid in the grape. He rests man's spirit dim
From grieving, when the vine exalteth him.
He giveth sleep to sink the fretful day
In cool forgetting. Is there any way
With man's sore heart, save only to forget?
Yea, being God, the blood of him is set
Before the Gods in sacrifice, that we
For his sake may be blest.—And so, to thee,
That fable shames him, how this God was knit
Into God's flesh? Nay, learn the truth of it,
Cleared from the false.—When from that deadly light
Zeus saved the babe, and up to Olympus' height
Raised him, and Hera's wrath would cast him thence,
Then Zeus devised him a divine defence.
A fragment of the world-encircling fire
He rent apart, and wrought to his desire
Of shape and hue, in the image of the child,
And gave to Hera's rage. And so, beguiled
By change and passing time, this tale was born,
How the babe-god was hidden in the torn
Flesh of his sire. He hath no shame thereby.
A prophet is he likewise. Prophecy
Cleaves to all frenzy, but beyond all else
To frenzy of prayer. Then in us verily dwells
The God himself, and speaks the thing to be.
Yea, and of Ares' realm a part hath he.
When mortal armies, mailèd and arrayed,
Have in strange fear, or ever blade met blade,
Fled maddened, 'tis this God hath palsied them.
Aye, over Delphi's rock-built diadem

Thou yet shalt see him leaping with his train
Of fire across the twin-peaked mountain-plain,
Flaming the darkness with his mystic wand,
And great in Hellas.—List and understand,
King Pentheus! Dream not thou that force is power;
Nor, if thou hast a thought, and that thought sour
And sick, oh, dream not thought is wisdom!—Up,
Receive this God to Thebes; pour forth the cup
Of sacrifice, and pray, and wreathe thy brow.
Thou fearest for the damsels? Think thee now;
How toucheth this the part of Dionyse
To hold maids pure perforce? In them it lies,
And their own hearts; and in the wildest rite
Cometh no stain to her whose heart is white.
Nay, mark me! Thou hast thy joy, when the Gate
Stands thronged, and Pentheus' name is lifted great
And high by Thebes in clamour; shall not He
Rejoice in his due meed of majesty?
Howbeit, this Cadmus whom thou scorn'st and I
Will wear His crown, and tread His dances! Aye,
Our hairs are white, yet shall that dance be trod!
I will not lift mine arm to war with God
For thee nor all thy words. Madness most fell
Is on thee, madness wrought by some dread spell,
But not by spell nor leechcraft to be cured!

CHORUS.

Grey prophet, worthy of Phoebus is thy word,
And wise in honouring Bromios, our great God.

CADMUS.

My son, right well Teiresias points thy road.
Oh, make thine habitation here with us,
Not lonely, against men's uses. Hazardous

Is this quick bird-like beating of thy thought
Where no thought dwells.—Grant that this God be naught,
Yet let that Naught be Somewhat in thy mouth;
Lie boldly, and say He Is! So north and south
Shall marvel, how there sprang a thing divine
From Semelê's flesh, and honour all our line.

[*Drawing nearer to* PENTHEUS.

Is there not blood before thine eyes even now?
Our lost Actaeon's blood, whom long ago
His own red hounds through yonder forest dim
Tore unto death, because he vaunted him
Against most holy Artemis? Oh, beware,
And let me wreathe thy temples. Make thy prayer
With us, and walk thee humbly in God's sight.

[*He makes as if to set the wreath on* PENTHEUS' *head.*

PENTHEUS.

Down with that hand! Aroint thee to thy rite,
Nor smear on me thy foul contagion!

[*Turning upon* TEIRESIAS.

This
Thy folly's head and prompter shall not miss
The justice that he needs!—Go, half my guard,
Forth to the rock-seat where he dwells in ward
O'er birds and wonders; rend the stone with crow
And trident; make one wreck of high and low,
And toss his bands to all the winds of air!
Ha, have I found the way to sting thee, there?
The rest, forth through the town! And seek amain
This girl-faced stranger, that hath wrought such bane
To all Thebes, preying on our maids and wives.
Seek till ye find; and lead him here in gyves,

Till he be judged and stoned, and weep in blood
The day he troubled Pentheus with his God!

[*The guards set forth in two bodies;* PENTHEUS *goes into the Castle.*

TEIRESIAS.

Hard heart, how little dost thou know what seed
Thou sowest! Blind before, and now indeed
Most mad!—Come, Cadmus, let us go our way,
And pray for this our persecutor, pray
For this poor city, that the righteous God
Move not in anger.—Take thine ivy rod
And help my steps, as I help thine. 'Twere ill,
If two old men should fall by the roadway. Still,
Come what come may, our service shall be done
To Bacchios, the All-Father's mystic son.
O Pentheus, named of sorrow! Shall he claim
From all thy house fulfilment of his name,
Old Cadmus?—Nay, I speak not from mine art,
But as I see—blind words and a blind heart!

[*The two Old Men go off towards the Mountain.*

CHORUS.

Some Maidens.

Thou Immaculate on high;
Thou Recording Purity;
Thou that stoopest, Golden Wing,
Earthward, manward, pitying,
Hearest thou this angry King?
Hearest thou the rage and scorn
'Gainst the Lord of Many Voices,
Him of mortal mother born,
Him in whom man's heart rejoices,

Girt with garlands and with glee,
First in Heaven's sovranty ?
For his kingdom, it is there,
In the dancing and the prayer,
In the music and the laughter,
In the vanishing of care,
And of all before and after;
In the Gods' high banquet, when
Gleams the grape-blood, flashed to heaven;
Yea, and in the feasts of men
Comes his crownèd slumber; then
Pain is dead and hate forgiven!

Others.

Loose thy lips from out the rein;
Lift thy wisdom to disdain;
Whatso law thou canst not see,
Scorning; so the end shall be
Uttermost calamity!
'Tis the life of quiet breath,
'Tis the simple and the true,
Storm nor earthquake shattereth,
Nor shall aught the house undo
Where they dwell. For, far away,
Hidden from the eyes of day,
Watchers are there in the skies,
That can see man's life, and prize
Deeds well done by things of clay.
But the world's Wise are not wise,
Claiming more than mortal may.
Life is such a little thing;
Lo, their present is departed,

And the dreams to which they cling
Come not. Mad imagining
Theirs, I ween, and empty-hearted!

Divers Maidens.

Where is the Home for me?
O Cyprus, set in the sea,
Aphrodite's home In the soft sea-foam,
Would I could wend to thee;
Where the wings of the Loves are furled,
And faint the heart of the world.

Aye, unto Paphos' isle,
Where the rainless meadows smile
With riches rolled From the hundred-fold
Mouths of the far-off Nile,
Streaming beneath the waves
To the roots of the seaward caves.

But a better land is there
Where Olympus cleaves the air,
The high still dell Where the Muses dwell,
Fairest of all things fair!
O there is Grace, and there is the Heart's Desire,
And peace to adore thee, thou Spirit of Guiding Fire!

A God of Heaven is he,
And born in majesty;
Yet hath he mirth In the joy of the Earth,
And he loveth constantly
Her who brings increase,
The Feeder of Children, Peace.

No grudge hath he of the great;
No scorn of the mean estate;
But to all that liveth His wine he giveth,
Griefless, immaculate;
Only on them that spurn
Joy, may his anger burn.

Love thou the Day and the Night;
Be glad of the Dark and the Light;
And avert thine eyes From the lore of the wise,
That have honour in proud men's sight.
The simple nameless herd of Humanity
Hath deeds and faith that are truth enough for me!

[*As the Chorus ceases, a party of the guards return, leading in the midst of them* DIONYSUS, *bound. The* SOLDIER *in command stands forth, as* PENTHEUS, *hearing the tramp of feet, comes out from the Castle.*

SOLDIER.

Our quest is finished, and thy prey, O King,
Caught; for the chase was swift, and this wild thing
Most tame; yet never flinched, nor thought to flee,
But held both hands out unresistingly—
No change, no blanching of the wine-red cheek.
He waited while we came, and bade us wreak
All thy decree; yea, laughed, and made my hest
Easy, till I for very shame confessed
And said: 'O stranger, not of mine own will
I bind thee, but his bidding to fulfil
Who sent me.'
And those prisoned Maids withal
Whom thou didst seize and bind within the wall

Of thy great dungeon, they are fled, O King,
Free in the woods, a-dance and glorying
To Bromios. Of their own impulse fell
To earth, men say, fetter and manacle,
And bars slid back untouched of mortal hand.
Yea, full of many wonders to thy land
Is this man come. . . . Howbeit, it lies with thee!

PENTHEUS.

Ye are mad!—Unhand him. Howso swift he be,
My toils are round him and he shall not fly.

[*The guards loose the arms of* DIONYSUS; PENTHEUS *studies him for a while in silence, then speaks jeeringly.* DIONYSUS *remains gentle and unafraid.*

Marry, a fair shape for a woman's eye,
Sir stranger! And thou seek'st no more, I ween!
Long curls, withal! That shows thou ne'er hast been
A wrestler!—down both cheeks so softly tossed
And winsome! And a white skin! It hath cost
Thee pains, to please thy damsels with this white
And red of cheeks that never face the light!

[DIONYSUS *is silent.*

Speak, sirrah; tell me first thy name and race.

DIONYSUS.

No glory is therein, nor yet disgrace.
Thou hast heard of Tmolus, the bright hill of flowers?

PENTHEUS.

Surely; the ridge that winds by Sardis' towers

DIONYSUS.

Thence am I; Lydia was my fatherland.

PENTHEUS.

And whence these revelations, that thy band
Spreadeth in Hellas?

DIONYSUS.

Their intent and use
Dionysus oped to me, the Child of Zeus.

PENTHEUS (*brutally*).

Is there a Zeus there, that can still beget
Young Gods?

DIONYSUS.

Nay, only He whose seal was set
Here in thy Thebes on Semelê.

PENTHEUS.

What way
Descended he upon thee? In full day
Or vision of night?

DIONYSUS.

Most clear he stood, and scanned
My soul, and gave his emblems to mine hand.

PENTHEUS.

What like be they, these emblems?

DIONYSUS.

That may none
Reveal, nor know, save his Elect alone.

PENTHEUS.

And what good bring they to the worshipper?

DIONYSUS.

Good beyond price, but not for thee to hear.

PENTHEUS.

Thou trickster! Thou wouldst prick me on the more
To seek them out!

DIONYSUS.

His mysteries abhor
The touch of sin-lovers.

PENTHEUS.

And so thine eyes
Saw this God plain; what guise had he?

DIONYSUS.

What guise
It liked him. 'Twas not I ordained his shape.

PENTHEUS.

Aye, deftly turned again. An idle jape,
And nothing answered!

DIONYSUS.

Wise words being brought
To blinded eyes will seem as things of nought.

PENTHEUS.

And comest thou first to Thebes, to have thy God
Established?

DIONYSUS.

Nay; all Barbary hath trod
His dance ere this.

PENTHEUS.

A low blind folk, I ween,
Beside our Hellenes!

DIONYSUS.

Higher and more keen
In this thing, though their ways are not thy way.

PENTHEUS.

How is thy worship held, by night or day?

DIONYSUS.

Most oft by night; 'tis a majestic thing,
The darkness.

PENTHEUS.

Ha! with women worshipping?
'Tis craft and rottenness!

DIONYSUS.

By day no less,
Whoso will seek may find unholiness.

PENTHEUS.

Enough! Thy doom is fixed, for false pretence
Corrupting Thebes.

DIONYSUS.

Not mine; but thine, for dense
Blindness of heart, and for blaspheming God!

PENTHEUS.

A ready knave it is, and brazen-browed,
This mystery-priest!

DIONYSUS.

Come, say what it shall be,
My doom; what dire thing wilt thou do to me?

PENTHEUS.

First, shear that delicate curl that dangles there.
[*He beckons to the soldiers, who approach* DIONYSUS.

DIONYSUS.

I have vowed it to my God ; 'tis holy hair.
[*The soldiers cut off the tress.*

PENTHEUS.

Next, yield me up thy staff!

DIONYSUS.

Raise thine own hand
To take it. This is Dionysus' wand.
[PENTHEUS *takes the staff.*

PENTHEUS.

Last, I will hold thee prisoned here.

DIONYSUS.

My Lord
God will unloose me, when I speak the word.

PENTHEUS.

He may, if e'er again amid his bands
Of saints he hears thy voice!

DIONYSUS.

Even now he stands
Close here, and sees all that I suffer.

PENTHEUS.

What?
Where is he? For mine eyes discern him not.

DIONYSUS.

Where I am! 'Tis thine own impurity
That veils him from thee.

PENTHEUS.

The dog jeers at me!
At me and Thebes! Bind him!
[*The soldiers begin to bind him.*

DIONYSUS.

I charge ye, bind
Me not! I having vision and ye blind!

PENTHEUS.

And I, with better right, say bind the more!
[*The soldiers obey.*

DIONYSUS.

Thou knowest not what end thou seekest, nor
What deed thou doest, nor what man thou art!

PENTHEUS (*mocking*).

Agâvê's son, and on the father's part
Echîon's, hight Pentheus!

DIONYSUS.

So let it be,
A name fore-written to calamity!

PENTHEUS.

Away, and tie him where the steeds are tied;
Aye, let him lie in the manger!—There abide
And stare into the darkness!—And this rout
Of womankind that clusters thee about,

Thy ministers of worship, are my slaves!
It may be I will sell them o'er the waves,
Hither and thither; else they shall be set
To labour at my distaffs, and forget
Their timbrel and their songs of dawning day!

DIONYSUS.

I go; for that which may not be, I may
Not suffer! Yet for this thy sin, lo, He
Whom thou deniest cometh after thee
For recompense. Yea, in thy wrong to us,
Thou hast cast Him into thy prison-house!

[DIONYSUS, *without his wand, his hair shorn, and his arms tightly bound, is led off by the guards to his dungeon.* PENTHEUS *returns into the Palace.*

CHORUS.

Some Maidens.

Acheloüs' roaming daughter,
Holy Dircê, virgin water,
Bathed he not of old in thee,
The Babe of God, the Mystery?
When from out the fire immortal
To himself his God did take him,
To his own flesh, and bespake him:
"Enter now life's second portal,
Motherless Mystery; lo, I break
Mine own body for thy sake,
Thou of the Twofold Door, and seal thee
Mine, O Bromios,"—thus he spake—
"And to this thy land reveal thee."

All.

Still my prayer toward thee quivers,
Dircê, still to thee I hie me;
Why, O Blessèd among Rivers,
Wilt thou fly me and deny me?
By His own joy I vow,
By the grape upon the bough,
Thou shalt seek Him in the midnight, thou shalt love Him, even now!

Other Maidens.

Dark and of the dark impassioned
Is this Pentheus' blood; yea, fashioned
Of the Dragon, and his birth
From Echîon, child of Earth.
He is no man, but a wonder;
Did the Earth-Child not beget him,
As a red Giant, to set him
Against God, against the Thunder?
He will bind me for his prize,
Me, the Bride of Dionyse;
And my priest, my friend, is taken
Even now, and buried lies;
In the dark he lies forsaken!

All.

Lo, we race with death, we perish,
Dionysus, here before thee!
Dost thou mark us not, nor cherish,
Who implore thee, and adore thee?
Hither down Olympus' side,
Come, O Holy One defied,
Be thy golden wand uplifted o'er the tyrant in his pride!

A Maiden.

Oh, where art thou? In thine own
Nysa, thou our help alone?
O'er fierce beasts in orient lands
Doth thy thronging thyrsus wave,
By the high Corycian Cave,
Or where stern Olympus stands;
In the elm-woods and the oaken,
There where Orpheus harped of old,
And the trees awoke and knew him,
And the wild things gathered to him,
As he sang amid the broken
Glens his music manifold?
Blessed Land of Piërie,
Dionysus loveth thee;
He will come to thee with dancing,
Come with joy and mystery;
With the Maenads at his hest
Winding, winding to the West;
Cross the flood of swiftly glancing
Axios in majesty;
Cross the Lydias, the giver
Of good gifts and waving green;
Cross that Father-Stream of story,
Through a land of steeds and glory
Rolling, bravest, fairest River
E'er of mortals seen!

A Voice Within.

Io! Io!
Awake, ye damsels; hear my cry,
Calling my Chosen; hearken ye!

A Maiden.

Who speaketh? Oh, what echoes thus?

Another.

A Voice, a Voice, that calleth us!

The Voice.

Be of good cheer! Lo, it is I,
The Child of Zeus and Semelê.

A Maiden.

O Master, Master, it is Thou!

Another.

O Holy Voice, be with us now!

The Voice.

Spirit of the Chained Earthquake,
Hear my word; awake, awake!
[*An Earthquake suddenly shakes the pillars of the Castle.*

A Maiden.

Ha! what is coming? Shall the hall
Of Pentheus racked in ruin fall?

Leader.

Our God is in the house! Ye maids adore Him!

Chorus.

We adore Him all!

THE VOICE.

Unveil the Lightning's eye ; arouse
The fire that sleeps, against this house !

[*Fire leaps up on the Tomb of Semelê.*

A MAIDEN.

Ah, saw ye, marked ye there the flame
From Semelê's enhallowed sod
Awakened ? Yea, the Death that came
Ablaze from heaven of old, the same
Hot splendour of the shaft of God ?

LEADER.

Oh, cast ye, cast ye, to the earth ! The Lord
Cometh against this house ! Oh, cast ye down,
Ye trembling damsels ; He, our own adored,
God's Child hath come, and all is overthrown !

[*The Maidens cast themselves upon the ground, their eyes earthward.* DIONYSUS, *alone and unbound, enters from the Castle.*

DIONYSUS.

Ye Damsels of the Morning Hills, why lie ye thus dismayed ?
Ye marked him, then, our Master, and the mighty hand he laid
On tower and rock, shaking the house of Pentheus ?
—But arise,
And cast the trembling from your flesh, and lift untroubled eyes.

LEADER.

O Light in Darkness, is it thou? O Priest, is this thy face?
My heart leaps out to greet thee from the deep of loneliness.

DIONYSUS.

Fell ye so quick despairing, when beneath the Gate I passed?
Should the gates of Pentheus quell me, or his darkness make me fast?

LEADER.

Oh, what was left if thou wert gone? What could I but despair?
How hast thou 'scaped the man of sin? Who freed thee from the snare?

DIONYSUS.

I had no pain nor peril; 'twas mine own hand set me free.

LEADER.

Thine arms were gyvèd!

DIONYSUS.

Nay, no gyve, no touch, was laid on me!
'Twas there I mocked him, in his gyves, and gave him dreams for food.
For when he led me down, behold, before the stall there stood
A Bull of Offering. And this King, he bit his lips, and straight
Fell on and bound it, hoof and limb, with gasping wrath and sweat.

And I sat watching!—Then a Voice; and lo, our Lord was come,
And the house shook, and a great flame stood o'er his mother's tomb.
And Pentheus hied this way and that, and called his thralls amain
For water, lest his roof-tree burn; and all toiled, all in vain.
Then deemed a-sudden I was gone; and left his fire, and sped
Back to the prison portals, and his lifted sword shone red.
But there, methinks, the God had wrought—I speak but as I guess—
Some dream-shape in mine image; for he smote at emptiness,
Stabbed in the air, and strove in wrath, as though 'twere me he slew.
Then 'mid his dreams God smote him yet again! He overthrew
All that high house. And there in wreck for evermore it lies,
That the day of this my bondage may be sore in Pentheus' eyes!
And now his sword is fallen, and he lies outworn and wan
Who dared to rise against his God in wrath, being but man.
And I uprose and left him, and in all peace took my path
Forth to my Chosen, recking light of Pentheus and his wrath.
But soft, methinks a footstep sounds even now within the hall;

'Tis he ; how think ye he will stand, and what words
speak withal ?
I will endure him gently, though he come in fury hot.
For still are the ways of Wisdom, and her temper
trembleth not !

Enter PENTHEUS *in fury.*

PENTHEUS.

It is too much ! This Eastern knave hath slipped
His prison, whom I held but now, hard gripped
In bondage.—Ha ! 'Tis he !—What, sirrah, how
Show'st thou before my portals ?

[*He advances furiously upon him.*

DIONYSUS.

Softly thou !
And set a quiet carriage to thy rage.

PENTHEUS.

How comest thou here ? How didst thou break thy
cage ?
Speak !

DIONYSUS.

Said I not, or didst thou mark not me,
There was One living that should set me free ?

PENTHEUS.

Who ? Ever wilder are these tales of thine.

DIONYSUS.

He who first made for man the clustered vine.

PENTHEUS.

I scorn him and his vines !

DIONYSUS.

For Dionyse
'Tis well; for in thy scorn his glory lies.

PENTHEUS (*to his guard*).

Go swift to all the towers, and bar withal
Each gate!

DIONYSUS.

What, cannot God o'erleap a wall?

PENTHEUS.

Oh, wit thou hast, save where thou needest it!

DIONYSUS.

Whereso it most imports, there is my wit!—
Nay, peace! Abide till he who hasteth from
The mountain side with news for thee, be come.
We will not fly, but wait on thy command.

[*Enter suddenly and in haste a Messenger from the Mountain.*

MESSENGER.

Great Pentheus, Lord of all this Theban land,
I come from high Kithaeron, where the frore
Snow spangles gleam and cease not evermore. . . .

PENTHEUS.

And what of import may thy coming bring?

MESSENGER.

I have seen the Wild White Women there, O King,
Whose fleet limbs darted arrow-like but now
From Thebes away, and come to tell thee how

They work strange deeds and passing marvel. Yet
I first would learn thy pleasure. Shall I set
My whole tale forth, or veil the stranger part?
Yea, Lord, I fear the swiftness of thy heart,
Thine edgèd wrath and more than royal soul.

PENTHEUS.

Thy tale shall nothing scathe thee.—Tell the whole.
It skills not to be wroth with honesty.
Nay, if thy news of them be dark, 'tis he
Shall pay it, who bewitched and led them on.

MESSENGER.

Our herded kine were moving in the dawn
Up to the peaks, the greyest, coldest time,
When the first rays steal earthward, and the rime
Yields, when I saw three bands of them. The one
Autonoë led, one Ino, one thine own
Mother, Agâvê. There beneath the trees
Sleeping they lay, like wild things flung at ease
In the forest; one half sinking on a bed
Of deep pine greenery; one with careless head
Amid the fallen oak leaves; all most cold
In purity—not as thy tale was told
Of wine-cups and wild music and the chase
For love amid the forest's loneliness.
Then rose the Queen Agâvê suddenly
Amid her band, and gave the God's wild cry,
"Awake, ye Bacchanals! I hear the sound
Of hornèd kine. Awake ye!"—Then, all round,
Alert, the warm sleep fallen from their eyes,
A marvel of swift ranks I saw them rise,

Dames young and old, and gentle maids unwed
Among them. O'er their shoulders first they shed
Their tresses, and caught up the fallen fold
Of mantles where some clasp had loosened hold,
And girt the dappled fawn-skins in with long
Quick snakes that hissed and writhed with quivering
tongue.
And one a young fawn held, and one a wild
Wolf cub, and fed them with white milk, and smiled
In love, young mothers with a mother's breast
And babes at home forgotten! Then they pressed
Wreathed ivy round their brows, and oaken sprays
And flowering bryony. And one would raise
Her wand and smite the rock, and straight a jet
Of quick bright water came. Another set
Her thyrsus in the bosomed earth, and there
Was red wine that the God sent up to her,
A darkling fountain. And if any lips
Sought whiter draughts, with dipping finger-tips
They pressed the sod, and gushing from the ground
Came springs of milk. And reed-wands ivy-crowned
Ran with sweet honey, drop by drop.—O King,
Hadst thou been there, as I, and seen this thing,
With prayer and most high wonder hadst thou gone
To adore this God whom now thou rail'st upon!
Howbeit, the kine-wardens and shepherds straight
Came to one place, amazed, and held debate;
And one being there who walked the streets and scanned
The ways of speech, took lead of them whose hand
Knew but the slow soil and the solemn hill,
And flattering spoke, and asked: "Is it your will,
Masters, we stay the mother of the King,
Agâvê, from her lawless worshipping,

And win us royal thanks?"—And this seemed good
To all; and through the branching underwood
We hid us, cowering in the leaves. And there
Through the appointed hour they made their prayer
And worship of the Wand, with one accord
Of heart and cry—"Iacchos, Bromios, Lord,
God of God born!"—And all the mountain felt,
And worshipped with them; and the wild things knelt
And ramped and gloried, and the wilderness
Was filled with moving voices and dim stress.
Soon, as it chanced, beside my thicket-close
The Queen herself passed dancing, and I rose
And sprang to seize her. But she turned her face
Upon me: "Ho, my rovers of the chase,
My wild White Hounds, we are hunted! Up, each rod
And follow, follow, for our Lord and God!"
Thereat, for fear they tear us, all we fled
Amazed; and on, with hand unweaponèd
They swept toward our herds that browsed the green
Hill grass. Great uddered kine then hadst thou seen
Bellowing in sword-like hands that cleave and tear,
A live steer riven asunder, and the air
Tossed with rent ribs or limbs of cloven tread,
And flesh upon the branches, and a red
Rain from the deep green pines. Yea, bulls of pride,
Horns swift to rage, were fronted and aside
Flung stumbling, by those multitudinous hands
Dragged pitilessly. And swifter were the bands
Of garbèd flesh and bone unbound withal
Than on thy royal eyes the lids may fall.
Then on like birds, by their own speed upborne,
They swept toward the plains of waving corn

That lie beside Asopus' banks, and bring
To Thebes the rich fruit of her harvesting.
On Hysiae and Erythrae that lie nursed
Amid Kithaeron's bowering rocks, they burst
Destroying, as a foeman's army comes.
They caught up little children from their homes,
High on their shoulders, babes unheld, that swayed
And laughed and fell not ; all a wreck they made ;
Yea, bronze and iron did shatter, and in play
Struck hither and thither, yet no wound had they ;
Caught fire from out the hearths, yea, carried hot
Flames in their tresses and were scorchèd not !

The village folk in wrath took spear and sword,
And turned upon the Bacchae. Then, dread Lord,
The wonder was. For spear nor barbèd brand
Could scathe nor touch the damsels ; but the Wand,
The soft and wreathèd wand their white hands sped,
Blasted those men and quelled them, and they fled
Dizzily. Sure some God was in these things !

And the holy women back to those strange springs
Returned, that God had sent them when the day
Dawned, on the upper heights ; and washed away
The stain of battle. And those girdling snakes
Hissed out to lap the waterdrops from cheeks
And hair and breast.

Therefore I counsel thee,
O King, receive this Spirit, whoe'er he be,
To Thebes in glory. Greatness manifold
Is all about him ; and the tale is told
That this is he who first to man did give
The grief-assuaging vine. Oh, let him live ;
For if he die, then Love herself is slain,
And nothing joyous in the world again !

LEADER.

Albeit I tremble, and scarce may speak my thought
To a king's face, yet will I hide it not.
Dionyse is God, no God more true nor higher!

PENTHEUS.

It bursts hard by us, like a smothered fire,
This frenzy of Bacchic women! All my land
Is made their mock.—This needs an iron hand!
Ho, Captain! Quick to the Electran Gate;
Bid gather all my men-at-arms thereat;
Call all that spur the charger, all who know
To wield the orbèd targe or bend the bow;
We march to war!—'Fore God, shall women dare
Such deeds against us? 'Tis too much to bear!

DIONYSUS.

Thou mark'st me not, O King, and holdest light
My solemn words; yet, in thine own despite,
I warn thee still. Lift thou not up thy spear
Against a God, but hold thy peace, and fear
His wrath! He will not brook it, if thou fright
His Chosen from the hills of their delight.

PENTHEUS.

Peace, thou! And if for once thou hast slipped thy chain,
Give thanks!—Or shall I knot thine arms again?

DIONYSUS.

Better to yield him prayer and sacrifice
Than kick against the pricks, since Dionyse
Is God, and thou but mortal.

PENTHEUS.

That will I!
Yea, sacrifice of women's blood, to cry
His name through all Kithaeron!

DIONYSUS.

Ye shall fly,
All, and abase your shields of bronzen rim
Before their wands.

PENTHEUS.

There is no way with him,
This stranger that so dogs us! Well or ill
I may entreat him, he must babble still!

DIONYSUS.

Wait, good my friend! These crooked matters may
Even yet be straightened.

[PENTHEUS *has started as though to seek his army at the gate.*

PENTHEUS.

Aye, if I obey
Mine own slaves' will; how else?

DIONYSUS.

Myself will lead
The damsels hither, without sword or steed.

PENTHEUS.

How now?—This is some plot against me!

DIONYSUS.

What
Dost fear? Only to save thee do I plot.

PENTHEUS.

It is some compact ye have made, whereby
To dance these hills for ever!

DIONYSUS.

Verily,
That is my compact, plighted with my Lord!

PENTHEUS (*turning from him*).

Ho, armourers! Bring forth my shield and sword!—
And thou, be silent!

DIONYSUS

(*after regarding him fixedly, speaks with resignation*).

Ah!—Have then thy will!

[*He fixes his eyes upon* PENTHEUS *again, while the armourers bring out his armour; then speaks in a tone of command.*

Man, thou wouldst fain behold them on the hill
Praying!

PENTHEUS

(*who during the rest of this scene, with a few exceptions, simply speaks the thoughts that* DIONYSUS *puts into him, losing power over his own mind*).

That would I, though it cost me all
The gold of Thebes!

DIONYSUS.

So much? Thou art quick to fall
To such great longing.

PENTHEUS

(*somewhat bewildered at what he has said*).

Aye; 'twould grieve me much
To see them flown with wine.

DIONYSUS.

Yet cravest thou such
A sight as would much grieve thee?

PENTHEUS.

Yes; I fain
Would watch, ambushed among the pines.

DIONYSUS.

'Twere vain
To hide. They soon will track thee out.

PENTHEUS.

Well said!
'Twere best done openly.

DIONYSUS.

Wilt thou be led
By me, and try the venture?

PENTHEUS.

Aye, indeed!
Lead on. Why should we tarry?

DIONYSUS.

First we need
A rich and trailing robe of fine-linen
To gird thee.

PENTHEUS.

Nay; am I a woman, then,
And no man more?

DIONYSUS.

Wouldst have them slay thee dead?
No man may see their mysteries.

PENTHEUS.

Well said !—
I marked thy subtle temper long ere now.

DIONYSUS.

'Tis Dionyse that prompteth me.

PENTHEUS.

And how
Mean'st thou the further plan ?

DIONYSUS.

First take thy way
Within. I will array thee.

PENTHEUS.

What array ?
The woman's ? Nay, I will not.

DIONYSUS.

Doth it change
So soon, all thy desire to see this strange
Adoring ?

PENTHEUS.

Wait ! What garb wilt thou bestow
About me ?

DIONYSUS.

First a long tress dangling low
Beneath thy shoulders.

PENTHEUS.

Aye, and next ?

DIONYSUS.

The said
Robe, falling to thy feet; and on thine head
A snood.

PENTHEUS.

And after? Hast thou aught beyond?

DIONYSUS.

Surely; the dappled fawn-skin and the wand.

PENTHEUS (*after a struggle with himself*):

Enough! I cannot wear a robe and snood.

DIONYSUS.

Wouldst liefer draw the sword and spill men's blood?

PENTHEUS (*again doubting*).

True, that were evil.—Aye; 'tis best to go
First to some place of watch.

DIONYSUS.

Far wiser so,
Than seek by wrath wrath's bitter recompense.

PENTHEUS.

What of the city streets? Canst lead me hence
Unseen of any?

DIONYSUS.

Lonely and untried
Thy path from hence shall be, and I thy guide!

PENTHEUS.

I care for nothing, so these Bacchanals
Triumph not against me! . . . Forward to my halls
Within!—I will ordain what seemeth best.

DIONYSUS.

So be it, O King! 'Tis mine to obey thine hest,
Whate'er it be.

PENTHEUS
(*after hesitating once more and waiting*).

Well, I will go—perchance
To march and scatter them with serried lance,
Perchance to take thy plan. . . . I know not yet.

[*Exit* PENTHEUS *into the Castle.*

DIONYSUS.

Damsels, the lion walketh to the net!
He finds his Bacchae now, and sees and dies,
And pays for all his sin!—O Dionyse,
This is thine hour and thou not far away.
Grant us our vengeance!—First, O Master, stay
The course of reason in him, and instil
A foam of madness. Let his seeing will,
Which ne'er had stooped to put thy vesture on,
Be darkened, till the deed is lightly done.
Grant likewise that he find through all his streets
Loud scorn, this man of wrath and bitter threats
That made Thebes tremble, led in woman's guise.
I go to fold that robe of sacrifice
On Pentheus, that shall deck him to the dark,
His mother's gift!—So shall he learn and mark
God's true Son, Dionyse, in fulness God,
Most fearful, yet to man most soft of mood.

[*Exit* DIONYSUS, *following* PENTHEUS *into the Castle.*

CHORUS.

Some Maidens.

Will they ever come to me, ever again,
The long long dances,
On through the dark till the dim stars wane?
Shall I feel the dew on my throat, and the stream
Of wind in my hair? Shall our white feet gleam
In the dim expanses?
Oh, feet of a fawn to the greenwood fled,
Alone in the grass and the loveliness;
Leap of the hunted, no more in dread,
Beyond the snares and the deadly press:
Yet a voice still in the distance sounds,
A voice and a fear and a haste of hounds;
O wildly labouring, fiercely fleet,
Onward yet by river and glen . . .
Is it joy or terror, ye storm-swift feet? . . .
To the dear lone lands untroubled of men,
Where no voice sounds, and amid the shadowy green
The little things of the woodland live unseen.

What else is Wisdom? What of man's endeavour
Or God's high grace, so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
And shall not Loveliness be loved for ever?

Others.

O Strength of God, slow art thou and still,
Yet failest never!
On them that worship the Ruthless Will,
On them that dream, doth His judgment wait.
Dreams of the proud man, making great
And greater ever,

Things which are not of God. In wide
And devious coverts, hunter-wise,
He coucheth Time's unhasting stride,
Following, following, him whose eyes
Look not to Heaven. For all is vain,
The pulse of the heart, the plot of the brain,
That striveth beyond the laws that live.
And is thy Faith so much to give,
Is it so hard a thing to see,
That the Spirit of God, whate'er it be,
The Law that abides and changes not, ages long,
The Eternal and Nature-born—these things be strong?

What else is Wisdom? What of man's endeavour
Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
And shall not Loveliness be loved for ever?

LEADER.

Happy he, on the weary sea
Who hath fled the tempest and won the haven.
Happy whoso hath risen, free,
Above his striving. For strangely graven
Is the orb of life, that one and another
In gold and power may outpass his brother.
And men in their millions float and flow
And seethe with a million hopes as leaven;
And they win their Will, or they miss their Will,
And the hopes are dead or are pined for still;
But whoe'er can know,
As the long days go,
That To Live is happy, hath found his Heaven!

Re-enter DIONYSUS *from the Castle.*

DIONYSUS.

O eye that cravest sights thou must not see,
O heart athirst for that which slakes not! Thee,
Pentheus, I call; forth and be seen, in guise
Of woman, Maenad, saint of Dionyse,
To spy upon His Chosen and thine own
Mother!

[*Enter* PENTHEUS, *clad like a Bacchanal, and strangely excited, a spirit of Bacchic madness overshadowing him.*

Thy shape, methinks, is like to one
Of Cadmus' royal maids!

PENTHEUS.

Yea; and mine eye
Is bright! Yon sun shines twofold in the sky,
Thebes twofold and the Wall of Seven Gates. . . .
And is it a Wild Bull this, that walks and waits
Before me? There are horns upon thy brow!
What art thou, man or beast? For surely now
The Bull is on thee!

DIONYSUS.

He who erst was wrath,
Goes with us now in gentleness. He hath
Unsealed thine eyes to see what thou shouldst see.

PENTHEUS.

Say; stand I not as Ino stands, or she
Who bore me?

DIONYSUS.

When I look on thee, it seems
I see their very selves !—But stay ; why streams
That lock abroad, not where I laid it, crossed
Under the coif ?

PENTHEUS.

I did it, as I tossed
My head in dancing, to and fro, and cried
His holy music !

DIONYSUS (*tending him*).

It shall soon be tied
Aright. 'Tis mine to tend thee. . . . Nay, but stand
With head straight.

PENTHEUS.

In the hollow of thy hand
I lay me. Deck me as thou wilt.

DIONYSUS.

Thy zone
Is loosened likewise ; and the folded gown
Not evenly falling to the feet.

PENTHEUS.

'Tis so,
By the right foot. But here, methinks, they flow
In one straight line to the heel.

DIONYSUS (*while tending him*).

And if thou prove
Their madness true, aye, more than true, what love
And thanks hast thou for me ?

PENTHEUS (*not listening to him*).

In my right hand
Is it, or thus, that I should bear the wand,
To be most like to them?

DIONYSUS.

Up let it swing
In the right hand, timed with the right foot's spring. . . .
'Tis well thy heart is changed!

PENTHEUS (*more wildly*).

What strength is this!
Kithaeron's steeps and all that in them is—
How say'st thou?—Could my shoulders lift the whole

DIONYSUS.

Surely thou canst, and if thou wilt! Thy soul,
Being once so sick, now stands as it should stand.

PENTHEUS.

Shall it be bars of iron? Or this bare hand
And shoulder to the crags, to wrench them down?

DIONYSUS.

Wouldst wreck the Nymphs' wild temples, and the brown
Rocks, where Pan pipes at noonday?

PENTHEUS.

Nay; not I!
Force is not well with women. I will lie
Hid in the pine-brake.

DIONYSUS.

Even as fits a spy
On holy and fearful things, so shalt thou lie!

PENTHEUS (*with a laugh*).

They lie there now, methinks—the wild birds, caught
By love among the leaves, and fluttering not!

DIONYSUS.

It may be. That is what thou goest to see,
Aye, and to trap them—so they trap not thee!

PENTHEUS.

Forth through the Thebans' town! I am their king,
Aye, their one Man, seeing I dare this thing!

DIONYSUS.

Yea, thou shalt bear their burden, thou alone;
Therefore thy trial awaiteth thee!—But on;
With me into thine ambush shalt thou come
Unscathed; then let another bear thee home!

PENTHEUS.

The Queen, my mother.

DIONYSUS.

Marked of every eye.

PENTHEUS.

For that I go!

DIONYSUS.

Thou shalt be borne on high!

PENTHEUS.

That were like pride!

DIONYSUS.

Thy mother's hands shall share
Thy carrying.

PENTHEUS.

Nay; I need not such soft care!

DIONYSUS.

So soft?

PENTHEUS.

Whate'er it be, I have earned it well!
[*Exit* PENTHEUS *towards the Mountain.*

DIONYSUS.

Fell, fell art thou; and to a doom so fell
Thou walkest, that thy name from South to North
Shall shine, a sign for ever!—Reach thou forth
Thine arms, Agâvê, now, and ye dark-browed
Cadmeian sisters! Greet this prince so proud
To the high ordeal, where save God and me,
None walks unscathed!—The rest this day shall see.
[*Exit* DIONYSUS *following* PENTHEUS.

CHORUS.

Some Maidens.

O hounds raging and blind,
Up by the mountain road,
Sprites of the maddened mind,
To the wild Maids of God;
Fill with your rage their eyes,
Rage at the rage unblest,
Watching in woman's guise,
The spy upon God's Possessed.

A Bacchanal.

Who shall be first, to mark
Eyes in the rock that spy,
Eyes in the pine-tree dark—
Is it his mother?—and cry:
"Lo, what is this that comes,
Haunting, troubling still,
Even in our heights, our homes,
The wild Maids of the Hill?
What flesh bare this child?
Never on woman's breast
Changeling so evil smiled;
Man is he not, but Beast!
Lion-shape of the wild,
Gorgon-breed of the waste!"

All the Chorus.

Hither, for doom and deed!
Hither with lifted sword,
Justice, Wrath of the Lord,
Come in our visible need!
Smite till the throat shall bleed,
Smite till the heart shall bleed,
Him the tyrannous, lawless, Godless, Echîon's earth-born seed!

Other Maidens.

Tyrannously hath he trod;
Marched him, in Law's despite,
Against thy Light, O God,
Yea, and thy Mother's Light;
Girded him, falsely bold,
Blinded in craft, to quell
And by man's violence hold
Things unconquerable.

A Bacchanal.

A strait pitiless mind
Is death unto godliness;
And to feel in human kind
Life, and a pain the less.
Knowledge, we are not foes!
I seek thee diligently;
But the world with a great wind blows,
Shining, and not from thee;
Blowing to beautiful things,
On, amid dark and light,
Till Life, through the trammellings
Of Laws that are not the Right,
Breaks, clean and pure, and sings
Glorying to God in the height!

All the Chorus.

Hither for doom and deed!
Hither with lifted sword,
Justice, Wrath of the Lord,
Come in our visible need!
Smite till the throat shall bleed,
Smite till the heart shall bleed,
Him the tyrannous, lawless, Godless, Echîon's earth-born seed!

LEADER.

Appear, appear, whatso thy shape or name
O Mountain Bull, Snake of the Hundred Heads,
Lion of Burning Flame!
O God, Beast, Mystery, come! Thy mystic maids
Are hunted!—Blast their hunter with thy breath,
Cast o'er his head thy snare;
And laugh aloud and drag him to his death,
Who stalks thy herded madness in its lair!

Enter hastily a MESSENGER *from the Mountain, pale and distraught.*

MESSENGER.

Woe to the house once blest in Hellas! Woe
To thee, old King Sidonian, who didst sow
The dragon-seed on Ares' bloody lea!
Alas, even thy slaves must weep for thee!

LEADER.

News from the mountain?—Speak! How hath it sped?

MESSENGER.

Pentheus, my king, Echîon's son, is dead!

LEADER.

All hail, God of the Voice,
Manifest ever more!

MESSENGER.

What say'st thou?—And how strange thy tone, as though
In joy at this my master's overthrow!

LEADER.

With fierce joy I rejoice,
Child of a savage shore;
For the chains of my prison are broken, and the dread where I cowered of yore!

MESSENGER.

And deem'st thou Thebes so beggared, so forlorn
Of manhood, as to sit beneath thy scorn?

LEADER.

Thebes hath o'er me no sway !
None save Him I obey,
Dionysus, Child of the Highest, Him I obey and adore !

MESSENGER.

One can forgive thee !—Yet 'tis no fair thing,
Maids, to rejoice in a man's suffering.

LEADER.

Speak of the mountain side !
Tell us the doom he died,
The sinner smitten to death, even where his sin was sore !

MESSENGER.

We climbed beyond the utmost habitings
Of Theban shepherds, passed Asopus' springs,
And struck into the land of rock on dim
Kithaeron—Pentheus, and, attending him,
I, and the Stranger who should guide our way.
Then first in a green dell we stopped, and lay,
Lips dumb and feet unmoving, warily
Watching, to be unseen and yet to see.
A narrow glen it was, by crags o'ertowered,
Torn through by tossing waters, and there lowered
A shadow of great pines over it. And there
The Maenad maidens sate ; in toil they were,
Busily glad. Some with an ivy chain
Tricked a worn wand to toss its locks again ;
Some, wild in joyance, like young steeds set free,
Made answering songs of mystic melody.
But my poor master saw not the great band
Before him. "Stranger," cried he, "where we stand

Mine eyes can reach not these false saints of thine.
Mount we the bank, or some high-shouldered pine,
And I shall see their follies clear!" At that
There came a marvel. For the Stranger straight
Touched a great pine-tree's high and heavenward crown,
And lower, lower, lower, urged it down
To the herbless floor. Round like a bending bow,
Or slow wheel's rim a joiner forces to,
So in those hands that tough and mountain stem
Bowed slow—oh, strength not mortal dwelt in them!—
To the very earth. And there he set the King,
And slowly, lest it cast him in its spring,
Let back the young and straining tree, till high
It towered again amid the towering sky;
And Pentheus in the branches! Well, I ween,
He saw the Maenads then, and well was seen!
For scarce was he aloft, when suddenly
There was no Stranger any more with me,
But out of Heaven a Voice—oh, what voice else?—
'Twas He that called! "Behold, O damosels,
I bring ye him who turneth to despite
Both me and ye, and darkeneth my great Light.
'Tis yours to avenge!" So spake he, and there came
'Twixt earth and sky a pillar of high flame.
And silence took the air, and no leaf stirred
In all the forest dell. Thou hadst not heard
In that vast silence any wild thing's cry.
And up they sprang; but with bewildered eye,
Agaze and listening, scarce yet hearing true.
Then came the Voice again. And when they knew
Their God's clear call, old Cadmus' royal brood,
Up, like wild pigeons startled in a wood,

On flying feet they came, his mother blind,
Agâvê, and her sisters, and behind
All the wild crowd, more deeply maddened then,
Through the angry rocks and torrent-tossing glen,
Until they spied him in the dark pine-tree :
Then climbed a crag hard by and furiously
Some sought to stone him, some their wands would fling
Lance-wise aloft, in cruel targeting.
But none could strike. The height o'ertopped their rage,
And there he clung, unscathed, as in a cage
Caught. And of all their strife no end was found.
Then, "Hither," cried Agâvê ; "stand we round
And grip the stem, my Wild Ones, till we take
This climbing cat-o'-the-mount ! He shall not make
A tale of God's high dances !" Out then shone
Arm upon arm, past count, and closed upon
The pine, and gripped ; and the ground gave, and down
It reeled. And that high sitter from the crown
Of the green pine-top, with a shrieking cry
Fell, as his mind grew clear, and there hard by
Was horror visible. 'Twas his mother stood
O'er him, first priestess of those rites of blood.
He tore the coif, and from his head away
Flung it, that she might know him, and not slay
To her own misery. He touched the wild
Cheek, crying : "Mother, it is I, thy child,
Thy Pentheus, born thee in Echîon's hall !
Have mercy, Mother ! Let it not befall
Through sin of mine, that thou shouldst slay thy son !"
But she, with lips a-foam and eyes that run
Like leaping fire, with thoughts that ne'er should be
On earth, possessed by Bacchios utterly,

Stays not nor hears. Round his left arm she put
Both hands, set hard against his side her foot,
Drew . . . and the shoulder severed !—Not by might
Of arm, but easily, as the God made light
Her hand's essay. And at the other side
Was Ino rending ; and the torn flesh cried,
And on Autonoë pressed, and all the crowd
Of ravening arms. Yea, all the air was loud
With groans that faded into sobbing breath,
Dim shrieks, and joy, and triumph-cries of death.
And here was borne a severed arm, and there
A hunter's booted foot ; white bones lay bare
With rending ; and swift hands ensanguinèd
Tossed as in sport the flesh of Pentheus dead.
His body lies afar. The precipice
Hath part, and parts in many an interstice
Lurk of the tangled woodland—no light quest
To find. And, ah, the head ! Of all the rest,
His mother hath it, pierced upon a wand,
As one might pierce a lion's, and through the land,
Leaving her sisters in their dancing place,
Bears it on high ! Yea, to these walls her face
Was set, exulting in her deed of blood,
Calling upon her Bromios, her God,
Her Comrade, Fellow-Render of the Prey,
Her All-Victorious, to whom this day
She bears in triumph . . . her own broken heart !
For me, after that sight, I will depart
Before Agâvê comes.—Oh, to fulfil
God's laws, and have no thought beyond His will,
Is man's best treasure. Aye, and wisdom true,
Methinks, for things of dust to cleave unto !

[*The* MESSENGER *departs into the Castle.*

CHORUS.

Some Maidens.

Weave ye the dance, and call
Praise to God!
Bless ye the Tyrant's fall!
Down is trod
Pentheus, the Dragon's Seed!
Wore he the woman's weed?
Clasped he his death indeed,
Clasped the rod?

A Bacchanal.

Yea, the wild ivy lapt him, and the doomed
Wild Bull of Sacrifice before him loomed!

Others.

Ye who did Bromios scorn,
Praise Him the more,
Bacchanals, Cadmus-born;
Praise with sore
Agony, yea, with tears!
Great are the gifts he bears!
Hands that a mother rears
Red with gore!

LEADER.

But stay, Agâvê cometh! And her eyes
Make fire around her, reeling! Ho, the prize
Cometh! All hail, O Rout of Dionyse!

[*Enter from the Mountain* AGAVE, *mad, and to all seeming wondrously happy, bearing the head of* PENTHEUS *in her hand. The* CHORUS MAIDENS *stand horror-struck at the sight; the* LEADER, *also horror-struck, strives to accept it and rejoice in it as the God's deed.*

AGAVE.

Ye from the lands of Morn!

LEADER.

Call me not; I give praise!

AGAVE.

Lo, from the trunk new-shorn
Hither a Mountain Thorn
Bear we! O Asia-born
Bacchanals, bless this chase!

LEADER.

I see. Yea; I see.
Have I not welcomed thee?

AGAVE (*very calmly and peacefully*).

He was young in the wildwood:
Without nets I caught him!
Nay; look without fear on
The Lion; I have ta'en him!

LEADER.

Where in the wildwood?
Whence have ye brought him?

AGAVE.

Kithaeron. . . .

LEADER.

Kithaeron?

AGAVE.

The Mountain hath slain him!

LEADER.

Who first came nigh him?

AGAVE.

I, I, 'tis confessèd!
And they named me there by him
Agâvê the Blessèd!

LEADER.

Who was next in the band on him?

AGAVE.

The daughters. . . .

LEADER.

The daughters?

AGAVE.

Of Cadmus laid hand on him.
But the swift hand that slaughters
Is mine; mine is the praise!
Bless ye this day of days!

[*The* LEADER *tries to speak, but is not able;* AGAVE *begins gently stroking the head.*

AGAVE.

Gather ye now to the feast!

LEADER.

Feast!—O miserable!

AGAVE.

See, it falls to his breast,
Curling and gently tressed,
The hair of the Wild Bull's crest—
The young steer of the fell!

LEADER.

Most like a beast of the wild
That head, those locks defiled.

AGAVE (*lifting up the head, more excitedly*).

He wakened his Mad Ones,
A Chase-God, a wise God!
He sprang them to seize this!
He preys where his band preys.

LEADER (*brooding, with horror*).

In the trail of thy Mad Ones
Thou tearest thy prize, God!

AGAVE.

Dost praise it?

LEADER.

I praise this?

AGAVE.

Ah, soon shall the land praise!

LEADER.

And Pentheus, O Mother,
Thy child?

AGAVE.

He shall cry on
My name as none other,
Bless the spoils of the Lion!

LEADER.

Aye, strange is thy treasure!

AGAVE.

And strange was the taking!

LEADER.

Thou art glad?

AGAVE.

Beyond measure;
Yea, glad in the breaking
Of dawn upon all this land,
By the prize, the prize of my hand!

LEADER.

Show then to all the land, unhappy one,
The trophy of this deed that thou hast done!

AGAVE.

Ho, all ye men that round the citadel
And shining towers of ancient Thêbê dwell,
Come! Look upon this prize, this lion's spoil,
That we have taken—yea, with our own toil,
We, Cadmus' daughters! Not with leathern-set
Thessalian javelins, not with hunter's net,
Only white arms and swift hands' bladed fall.
Why make ye much ado, and boast withal
Your armourers' engines? See, these palms were bare
That caught the angry beast, and held, and tare
The limbs of him! . . . Father! . . . Go, bring to me
My father! . . . Aye, and Pentheus, where is he,

My son? He shall set up a ladder-stair
Against this house, and in the triglyphs there
Nail me this lion's head, that gloriously
I bring ye, having slain him—I, even I!

[*She goes through the crowd towards the Castle, showing the head and looking for a place to hang it. Enter from the Mountain* CADMUS, *with attendants, bearing the body of* PENTHEUS *on a bier.*

CADMUS.

On, with your awful burden. Follow me,
Thralls, to his house, whose body grievously
With many a weary search at last in dim
Kithaeron's glens I found, torn limb from limb,
And through the interweaving forest weed
Scattered.—Men told me of my daughters' deed,
When I was just returned within these walls,
With grey Teiresias, from the Bacchanals.
And back I hied me to the hills again
To seek my murdered son. There saw I plain
Actaeon's mother, ranging where he died,
Autonoë; and Ino by her side,
Wandering ghastly in the pine-copses.
Agâvê was not there. The rumour is
She cometh fleet-foot hither.—Ah! 'Tis true;
A sight I scarce can bend mine eyes unto.

AGAVE

(*turning from the Palace and seeing him*).

My father, a great boast is thine this hour.
Thou hast begotten daughters, high in power

And valiant above all mankind—yea, all
Valiant, though none like me! I have let fall
The shuttle by the loom, and raised my hand
For higher things, to slay from out thy land
Wild beasts! See, in mine arms I bear the prize,
That nailed above these portals it may rise
To show what things thy daughters did! Do thou
Take it, and call a feast. Proud art thou now
And highly favoured in our valiancy!

CADMUS.

O depth of grief, how can I fathom thee
Or look upon thee!—Poor, poor, bloodstained hand!
Poor sisters!—A fair sacrifice to stand
Before God's altars, daughter; yea, and call
Me and my citizens to feast withal!
Nay, let me weep—for thine affliction most,
Then for mine own. All, all of us are lost,
Not wrongfully, yet is it hard, from one
Who might have loved—our Bromios, our own!

AGAVE.

How crabbèd and how scowling in the eyes
Is man's old age!—Would that my son likewise
Were happy of his hunting, in my way,
When with his warrior bands he will essay
The wild beast!—Nay, his valiance is to fight
With God's will! Father, thou shouldst set him right. . . .
Will no one bring him hither, that mine eyes
May look on his, and show him this my prize!

CADMUS.

Alas, if ever ye can know again
The truth of what ye did, what pain of pain
That truth shall bring! Or were it best to wait
Darkened for evermore, and deem your state
Not misery, though ye know no happiness?

AGAVE.

What seest thou here to chide, or not to bless?

CADMUS (*after hesitation, resolving himself*).

Raise me thine eyes to yon blue dome of air!

AGAVE.

'Tis done. What dost thou bid me seek for there?

CADMUS.

Is it the same, or changèd in thy sight?

AGAVE.

More shining than before, more heavenly bright!

CADMUS.

And that wild tremor, is it with thee still?

AGAVE (*troubled*).

I know not what thou sayest; but my will
Clears, and some change cometh, I know not how.

CADMUS.

Canst hearken then, being changed, and answer, now?

AGAVE.

I have forgotten something; else I could.

CADMUS.

What husband led thee of old from mine abode?

AGAVE.

Echîon, whom men named the Child of Earth.

CADMUS.

And what child in Echîon's house had birth?

AGAVE.

Pentheus, of my love and his father's bred.

CADMUS.

Thou bearest in thine arms an head—what head?

AGAVE

(*beginning to tremble, and not looking at what she carries*).

A lion's—so they all said in the chase.

CADMUS.

Turn to it now—'tis no long toil—and gaze.

AGAVE.

Ah! But what is it? What am I carrying here?

CADMUS.

Look once upon it full, till all be clear!

AGAVE.

I see . . . most deadly pain! Oh, woe is me!

CADMUS.

Wears it the likeness of a lion to thee?

AGAVE.

No; 'tis the head—O God!—of Pentheus, this!

CADMUS.

Blood-drenched ere thou wouldst know him! Aye, 'tis his.

AGAVE.

Who slew him?—How came I to hold this thing?

CADMUS.

O cruel Truth, is this thine home-coming?

AGAVE.

Answer! My heart is hanging on thy breath!

CADMUS.

'Twas thou.—Thou and thy sisters wrought his death.

AGAVE.

In what place was it? His own house, or where?

CADMUS.

Where the dogs tore Actaeon, even there.

AGAVE.

Why went he to Kithaeron? What sought he?

CADMUS.

To mock the God and thine own ecstasy.

AGAVE.

But how should we be on the hills this day?

CADMUS.

Being mad! A spirit drove all the land that way.

AGAVE.

'Tis Dionyse hath done it! Now I see.

CADMUS (*earnestly*).

Ye wronged Him! Ye denied his deity!

AGAVE (*turning from him*).

Show me the body of the son I love!

CADMUS (*leading her to the bier*).

'Tis here, my child. Hard was the quest thereof.

AGAVE.

Laid in due state?

[*As there is no answer, she lifts the veil of the bier, and sees.*

Oh, if I wrought a sin,
'Twas mine! What portion had my child therein?

CADMUS.

He made him like to you, adoring not
The God; who therefore to one bane hath brought
You and this body, wrecking all our line,
And me. Aye, no man-child was ever mine;
And now this first-fruit of the flesh of thee,
Sad woman, foully here and frightfully
Lies murdered! Whom the house looked up unto,
[*Kneeling by the body.*
O Child, my daughter's child! who heldest true
My castle walls; and to the folk a name
Of fear thou wast; and no man sought to shame
My grey beard, when they knew that thou wast there,
Else had they swift reward!—And now I fare

Forth in dishonour, outcast, I, the great
Cadmus, who sowed the seed-rows of this state
Of Thebes, and reaped the harvest wonderful.
O my belovèd, though thy heart is dull
In death, O still belovèd, and alway
Belovèd! Never more, then, shalt thou lay
Thine hand to this white beard, and speak to me
Thy "Mother's Father"; ask "Who wrongeth thee?
Who stints thine honour, or with malice stirs
Thine heart? Speak, and I smite thine injurers!"
But now—woe, woe, to me and thee also,
Woe to thy mother and her sisters, woe
Alway! Oh, whoso walketh not in dread
Of Gods, let him but look on this man dead!

LEADER.

Lo, I weep with thee. 'Twas but due reward
God sent on Pentheus; but for thee . . . 'Tis hard.

AGAVE.

My father, thou canst see the change in me,

* * * * *
* * * * *

[*A page or more has here been torn out of the MS. from which all our copies of "The Bacchae" are derived. It evidently contained a speech of Agâvê (followed presumably by some words of the Chorus), and an appearance of* DIONYSUS *upon a cloud. He must have pronounced judgment upon the Thebans in general, and especially upon the daughters of* CADMUS, *have justified his own action, and declared his determination to establish his godhead. Where the MS. begins again, we find him addressing* CADMUS.]

* * * * *

DIONYSUS.

* * * * *
* * * * *

And tell of Time, what gifts for thee he bears,
What griefs and wonders in the winding years.
For thou must change and be a Serpent Thing
Strange, and beside thee she whom thou didst bring
Of old to be thy bride from Heaven afar,
Harmonia, daughter of the Lord of War.
Yea, and a chariot of kine—so spake
The word of Zeus—thee and thy Queen shall take
Through many lands, Lord of a wild array
Of orient spears. And many towns shall they
Destroy beneath thee, that vast horde, until
They touch Apollo's dwelling, and fulfil
Their doom, back driven on stormy ways and steep.
Thee only and thy spouse shall Ares keep,
And save alive to the Islands of the Blest.
Thus speaketh Dionysus, Son confessed
Of no man but of Zeus !—Ah, had ye seen
Truth in the hour ye would not, all had been
Well with ye, and the Child of God your friend !

AGAVE.

Dionysus, we beseech thee ! We have sinned !

DIONYSUS.

Too late ! When there was time, ye knew me not !

AGAVE.

We have confessed. Yet is thine hand too hot.

DIONYSUS.

Ye mocked me, being God ; this is your wage.

AGAVE.

Should God be like a proud man in his rage?

DIONYSUS.

'Tis as my sire, Zeus, willed it long ago.

AGAVE (*turning from him almost with disdain*).

Old Man, the word is spoken; we must go.

DIONYSUS.

And seeing ye must, what is it that ye wait?

CADMUS.

Child, we are come into a deadly strait,
All; thou, poor sufferer, and thy sisters twain,
And my sad self. Far off to barbarous men,
A grey-haired wanderer, I must take my road.
And then the oracle, the doom of God,
That I must lead a raging horde far-flown
To prey on Hellas; lead my spouse, mine own
Harmonia, Ares' child, discorporate
And haunting forms, dragon and dragon-mate,
Against the tombs and altar-stones of Greece,
Lance upon lance behind us; and not cease
From toils, like other men, nor dream, nor past
The foam of Acheron find my peace at last.

AGAVE.

Father! And I must wander far from thee!

CADMUS.

O Child, why wilt thou reach thine arms to me,
As yearns the milk-white swan, when old swans die?

AGAVE.

Where shall I turn me else? No home have I.

CADMUS.

I know not; I can help thee not.

AGAVE.

Farewell, O home, O ancient tower!
Lo, I am outcast from my bower,
And leave ye for a worser lot.

CADMUS.

Go forth, go forth to misery,
The way Actaeon's father went!

AGAVE.

Father, for thee my tears are spent.

CADMUS.

Nay, Child, 'tis I must weep for thee;

For thee and for thy sisters twain!

AGAVE.

On all this house, in bitter wise,
Our Lord and Master, Dionyse,
Hath poured the utter dregs of pain!

DIONYSUS.

In bitter wise, for bitter was the shame
Ye did me, when Thebes honoured not my name.

AGAVE.

Then lead me where my sisters be;
Together let our tears be shed,
Our ways be wandered; where no red
Kithaeron waits to gaze on me;

Nor I gaze back ; no thyrsus stem,
Nor song, nor memory in the air.
Oh, other Bacchanals be there,
Not I, not I, to dream of them !

[AGAVE *with her group of attendants goes out on the side away from the Mountain.* DIONYSUS *rises upon the Cloud and disappears.*

CHORUS.

There be many shapes of mystery.
And many things God makes to be,
Past hope or fear.
And the end men looked for cometh not,
And a path is there where no man thought.
So hath it fallen here. [*Exeunt.*

NOTES ON THE HIPPOLYTUS

Prologue.—The Aphrodite of Euripides' actual belief, if one may venture to dogmatise on such a subject, was almost certainly not what we should call a goddess, but rather a Force of Nature, or a Spirit working in the world. To deny her existence you would have to say not merely, "There is no such person," but "There is no such thing;" and such a denial would be a defiance of obvious facts. It is in this sense that it is possible to speak of Hippolytus as "sinning against Aphrodite."

For the purposes of drama, of course, this "thing" must be made into a person, and even represented in human form according to the current conceptions of mythology. And, once personified, she becomes, like most of the Olympians in Euripides, certainly hateful and perhaps definitely evil, though still far removed from the degraded, ultra-feminine goddess of Ovid and the handbooks of mythology. In this prologue she retains much of the impersonal grandeur of a Force of Nature. The words "I grudge it not: no grudge know I, nor hate," are doubtless intended to be true.

P. 3, l. 11, Pittheus.]—Father of Aethra, who was Theseus' mother. Formerly King of Trozên, now ending his days in a life of meditation.

P. 4, ll. 31 ff., She built a shrine.]—An obscure passage, in which I follow the suggestion of Dr.

Verrall (*Class. Rev.* xv. 449). Euripides is evidently giving an account of the origin of a sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandêmos on the Acropolis, which in his day was known as *Ἀφροδίτη ἐπὶ Ἱππολύτῳ*, *i.e.* (as, at least, he imagined) "Aphrodite for Hippolytus," or "with a view to Hippolytus." Phaedra, he says, built this shrine *because of*, *thinking of*, Hippolytus —*i.e.* seeking to exorcise her passion for him, and to fix her errant love at home as she fixed the shrine in the rock. She perhaps—so Dr. Verrall suggests—called it Aphrodite Endêmos, "Love-at-home" or "in-the-land." When her plan failed, and it appeared that Love will not be fixed down in one place, the name was changed to Pandêmos, "of-all-lands." Of course it is not certain, nor even very probable, that either *Πάνδημος* or *ἐπὶ Ἱππολύτῳ* originally bore the meaning that Euripides and his contemporaries attached to them. *Ἐπὶ Ἱππολύτῳ*, for instance, is quite likely, in its original form, to have meant "the shrine at the place where horses are unyoked."

P. 6, l. 73, From a green and virgin meadow.] —There are long discussions in the ancient Greek commentators, whether this meadow is real or allegorical. Is it only the garland of his adoration from the meadow of his virgin soul? "It seems odd," says one of them, "to have a meadow which you are not allowed to enter until you can show that your good qualities do not come from education!" Doubtless it is a real sacred meadow.

Pp. 7, 8, ll. 99, 103.—In two lines, "Then why wilt thou be proud?" and "Clean? Nay, proud," I follow my own published text, reading *σεμνὸς* for *σεαυτὴν* and *σεμνή*.

P. 9, l. 121, Of Ocean's tribe.]—The river Ocean was, by some accounts, the father of all fresh and pure water.

P. 10, ll. 142, 143, Hecate . . . Pan . . . the Corybantes.]—These powers all produced seizures, terrors, and ecstasies. Dictynna (often a mere alternative name for Artemis) was, strictly speaking, a Cretan sea-goddess—cf. *δίκτυον*, "a net"—a hunter of the sea as Artemis is a hunter of the land. (She is identified with Artemis on p. 59.) She can catch Phaedra in Limna, the "Mere" in the neighbourhood of Trozên, because Limna is a dried-up lagoon that was once part of the sea, and therefore belongs to the sea powers.

P. 10, l. 151, Erechtheus.] — An old king of Athens.

P. 12, ll. 193, 194, This nameless and shining thing.] —Reading *τοῦ δ' ὅτι τοῦτο στίλβει . . . δυσέρωτες.*

P. 13, l. 228, The Sea-lorn Mere.] — The dried lagoon, Limna, near Trozên, used for chariot races. The "unseaswept sands," just below, are the same.

P. 15, ll. 264, 265.—"Thorough" and "Naught too much" were mottoes of two of the legendary Seven Wise Men.

P. 16, l. 281, He is on a journey.] — Apparently to an oracle (see below). Perhaps there was a definite tradition saying where he had gone and why, but if so, it is lost. A modern playwright would, of course, fill in these details, for the sake of verisimilitude; the ancient playwright intentionally omits them as irrelevant, just as he omits to give proper names to his Nurses, Messengers, and Leaders of the Chorus.

P. 19, l. 325, What wouldst thou? Force me.] — It was of the nature of sin to reject a suppliant, *i.e.*

a person who threw himself entirely upon your mercy, and implored you. The repugnance that an ordinary person has to such a rejection was felt by the Greeks in a religious way. The ultimate sanction, if you did harden your heart, would be twofold: first, the gods would have a natural repulsion against one who formally and knowingly refused to be merciful; secondly, the suppliant might do what the Nurse threatens to do here, and stay immovable till he died of hunger or exposure—and his death would lie at the door of his rejector!

P. 20, ll. 337–341, Mother, poor Mother, that didst love so sore.]—Phaedra thinks of the general wreck of her house through love. Her mother, Pasiphaê, wife of Minos, loved the pirate or adventurer Tauros ("The Bull"), was cast into prison by her husband, and there starved herself to death (see Appendix, *The Cretans*). Her sister, Ariadnê, had loved Theseus; he saved her from her father's vengeance, but by command of the gods left her on the lonely island of Naxos, where the god Dionysus came and carried her away (see Appendix, *The Theseus*).

P. 22, l. 372, The Isle of awful Love.] — Crete, because of Pasiphaê, Ariadnê, Aëropê, the wife of Thyestes, and other heroines of terrible love-stories.

P. 23, l. 373, O Women, dwellers in this portal-seat.]—This wonderful passage is very characteristic of Euripides—a subtle and beautiful study of character expressed in a formal, self-analysing speech. The "delights" that have tempted and undone her are, first, the pleasure of long talks—with Hippolytus, or about him; next, the pleasure of losing herself in dreams; and thirdly, in some sense not precisely

explained, but surely not difficult to understand, a feeling of shame or cowardice. She feels that if only she had had more courage all might have been well! Why this "shame," this yielding to fear, strikes her at this moment as a "delight," is not explained; but it does not seem to me unnatural.

P. 25, l. 433, Mistress, a sharp, swift terror, &c.]—This speech of the Nurse, so beautiful and so full of sophistries, is typically the kind of thing that caused Euripides to be accused of immoral writing.

P. 28, l. 478, Love-philtres.] — The situation at the end of this scene seems to be this: The Nurse goes in to prepare a magic charm *which shall cure Phaedra of her love*, but mentions that, in order to prepare it, she must get something belonging to Hippolytus to weave into the charm. (Either a material object to be actually woven into the charm, or a word, to be ceremonially caught and woven in —a common device in magic.) Phaedra suspects that she means to speak to Hippolytus, and the Nurse's next words rather confirm her suspicions; but, broken and weary as she is, she has not strength or keenness of mind enough to make sure and to prevent her doing so. A large part of her nature, no doubt, longs to have Hippolytus told, and succeeds at this critical moment in lulling to sleep her exhausted will and conscience.

P. 30, ll. 545–564, Chorus.] —The second strophe and antistrophe ("On Oechalian hills, &c."), are rather obscure. The connection of thought is: "Think of the terrible things that have befallen through love! How Iolê, daughter of Eurytus, suffered, when the angry love of Heracles made him burn her father's house in Oechalia, and carry her off amid flames and

blood. And how Semelê, the mother of Bacchus, suffered in Thebes by the waters of Dircê, when Zeus came to her in a blaze of lightning, and his love was her death."

P. 33, l. 612, 'Twas but my tongue, 'twas not my soul that swore.]—A line constantly misrepresented and attacked (see on *Frogs*, l. 101, p. 187). In reality Hippolytus faces death rather than break the oath that he was trapped into.

P. 34, l. 616, O God, why hast thou made this gleaming snare.]—The fury of this speech, while not unnatural to the youthful saintliness of Hippolytus, is intentionally made bitter and offensive by the playwright, so as to throw our sympathies for the time entirely on the side of Phaedra. We hate Hippolytus, and can for the moment sympathise with, or at least understand, her terrible act of blind self-preservation and revenge.

P. 36, l. 690, He speeds to abase me to the King.]—He had definitely said that he would not do so; but she felt his hatred, she had no reason to trust him, she had just been betrayed by one much closer to her, and probably she had hardly even noticed the actual words in his torrent of rage.

P. 38, l. 712, Know naught and speak of naught.]—This oath of the Chorus is important for the sequel of the play. It prevents them from saving Hippolytus.

P. 39, l. 732, Could I take me to some cavern for mine hiding.]—This lovely song seems to me a good instance of the artistic value of the Greek chorus. The last scene has been tragic to the point of painfulness; the one thing that can heal the pain without spoiling the interest is an outburst of pure poetry.

And the sentiment of this song, the longing to escape to a realm, if not of happiness, at least of beautiful sadness, is so magically right.

Phaëthon, who tried to drive the chariot of the Sun and fell, was buried by the river Eridanus (afterwards identified with the Po). His sisters wept over his grave, and their tears turned to drops of amber.

P. 39, l. 742, The apple-tree, the singing and the gold.]—The Garden of the Hesperides, or Daughters of the Sunset, was in the West, near the Pillars of Heracles, which marked the utmost limit to which man might travel. The apple-tree bore golden apples, and it was here that Zeus walked in the garden and first met his bride, Hera.

P. 40, l. 756, Sure some spell upon either hand.] — A curse or spell must have come with her from Crete. It was difficult for a curse to come from one country to another. Exactly like infection, it had to be somehow carried. The women suggest that it came with Phaedra in the ship, and then, when the ship was moored in Munychia, the old harbour of Athens, it crawled up the cables to the shore.

P. 42, l. 803, A fit of the old cold anguish ?] — It is characteristic of Euripides to throw these sudden lights back on the history of his characters. We never knew before (except perhaps from the Prologue) that Phaedra had had these fits of "cold anguish," or that Theseus had noticed them. Cf. p. 56, where for the first time we have a reference to Theseus' own turbulent youth, and his crime against the Amazon, Hippolytus' mother. And p. 50, where we first hear that Hippolytus fasted and followed Orphic rites.

P. 42, l. 804, But now arrived we be.] — A lie, to make the avoidance of explanations easier.

Pp. 43 f., ll. 817–851.]—The laments of Theseus, though they cannot compensate for the drop of dramatic interest after Phaedra's death, are full of beauty and also of character. They bring out clearly the passionateness of the old hero, and also the way in which he only gradually, and then with increasing emotion, realises his loss.

P. 51, l. 977.]—Sinis was a robber slain by Theseus at the Isthmus of Corinth. He tied his victims to the tops of pine-trees, which he had bent to the ground, and, according to Hyginus, sent them flying in the air so that they fell and were killed; as Pausanias rather more intelligibly puts it, he tied them between two pines, which he had bent together, and then let the pines spring back and rack the men asunder. Skiron was another robber in the same neighbourhood; he made travellers wash his feet on the top of a cliff—the Skironian Rock (cf. p. 63)—and then kicked them into the sea.

Pp. 51–54, ll. 983 ff., Hippolytus' speech.] — The ineffectiveness of this speech is, of course, intentional on the poet's part. The one effective answer for Hippolytus would be to break his oath and tell the whole truth. As it is, he can do nothing but appeal to his known character, and plead passionately against all the inferences that his father has drawn as to his general hypocrisy.

P. 54, l. 1036, It is enough.] — The Chorus, debarred from announcing the truth, catch at any straws that tell in favour of the truth.

P. 54, l. 1041, Father, 'tis thy mood that makes me

marvel.]—He means, I think, to make Theseus realise that the charge is flatly incredible. "You yourself do not believe that I have done such a thing! I know, and you know, that you do not believe it. If you did, you would kill me on the spot, not go on talking like this."

P. 55, l. 1057, No prophet's lot.]—A prophet spoke from some "sign" or "lot" which he interpreted. This might be an actual "lot," drawn or cast; or by extension, any other sign, from the flesh of a victim or from the flight of birds.

P. 60, l. 1142, And I, even I, &c.] — The song of this maiden may have given Racine the hint of his additional character, Aricie, the princess whom his Hippolyte loves.

P. 62, l. 1195, And down the road we henchmen followed.]—They walked or ran beside the chariot, accompanying their master to the frontier. Ancient chariots, when used for travelling, went slowly.

P. 70, l. 1391, O breath of heavenly fragrance, &c.] —This and the next line make one doubt whether Artemis was supposed to be visible, or only present as a voice. Cf. p. 6, l. 86, "Though none may see thine eyes."

P. 72, l. 1420, My hand shall win its vengeance.]— By causing the death of Adônis, whom Aphrodite loved. It is noteworthy how Euripides' moral hatred of the orthodox Olympian gods breaks out even in this passage, otherwise so exquisitely beautiful. The human beings are full of love and mutual forgiveness. The goddess, radiantly lovely as she is and pure with the purity of dawn, still thinks of revenge, and—as appears at her departure—is, in some profoundly tragic

sense, unloving: a being to be adored, not to love back. The last consolation of Hippolytus is the thought of his perfect devotion to one who in the nature of things can care for him only a little: "I have obeyed Her all my days."

The thing that is missing from Artemis is exactly what is present in the beautiful vase picture of the Dawn Goddess raising in her arms the body of her slain son, Memnon.

This last scene is one of those passages which show the ultimate falseness of the distinction between Classical and Romantic. The highest poetry has the beauty of both.

EOS, THE DAWN-GODDESS, RAISING HER SLAIN SON

p. 164

NOTES ON THE BACCHAE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The *Bacchae*, being from one point of view a religious drama, a kind of "mystery play," is full of allusions both to the myth and to the religion of Dionysus.

1. The Myth, as implied by Euripides. Semelê, daughter of Cadmus, being loved by Zeus, asked her divine lover to appear to her once in his full glory; he came, a blaze of miraculous lightning, in the ecstasy of which Semelê died, giving premature birth to a son. Zeus, to save this child's life and make him truly God as well as Man, tore open his own flesh and therein fostered the child till in due time, by a miraculous and mysterious Second Birth, the child of Semelê came to full life as God.

2. The Religion of Dionysus is hard to formulate or even describe, both because of its composite origins and because of its condition of constant vitality, fluctuation, and development.

(*a*) The first datum, apparently, is the introduction from Thrace of the characteristic God of the wild northern mountains, a God of Intoxication, of Inspiration, a giver of superhuman or immortal life. His worship is superposed upon that of divers old Tree or Vegetation Gods, already worshipped in

Greece. He becomes specially the God of the Vine. Originally a god of the common folk, despised and unauthorised, he is eventually so strong as to be adopted into the Olympian hierarchy as the "youngest" of the Gods, son of Zeus. His "Olympian" name, so to speak, is Dionysus, but in his worship he is addressed by numbers of names, more or less mystic and secret—Bromios, Bacchios or Baccheus, Iacchos, Eleuthereus, Zagreus, Sabazios, &c. Some of these may be the names of old spirits whom he has displaced; some are his own Thracian names. Bromos and Sabaja, for instance, seem to have been Thracian names for two kinds of intoxicating drink. Bacchos means a "wand." Together with his many names, he has many shapes, especially appearing as a Bull and a Serpent.

(*b*) This religion, very primitive and barbarous, but possessing a strong hold over the emotions of the common people, was seized upon and transfigured by the great wave of religious reform, known under the name of Orphism, which swept over Greece and South Italy in the sixth century B.C., and influenced the teachings of such philosophers as Pythagoras, Aristeas, Empedocles, and the many writers on purification and the world after death. Orphism may very possibly represent an ancient Cretan religion in clash or fusion with one from Thrace. At any rate, it was grafted straight upon the Dionysus-worship, and, without rationalising, spiritualised and reformed it. Ascetic, mystical, ritualistic, and emotional, Orphism easily excited both enthusiasm and ridicule. It lent itself both to inspired saintliness and to imposture. In doctrine it laid especial stress upon sin, and the

sacerdotal purification of sin ; on the eternal reward due beyond the grave to the pure and the impure, the pure living in an eternal ecstasy—"perpetual intoxication," as Plato satirically calls it—the impure toiling through long ages to wash out their stains. It recast in various ways the myth of Dionysus, and especially the story of his Second Birth. All true worshippers become in a mystical sense one with the God ; they are born again and are "Bacchoi." Dionysus being the God within, the perfectly pure soul is possessed by the God wholly, and becomes nothing but the God.

Based on very primitive rites and feelings, on the religion of men who made their gods in the image of snakes and bulls and fawns, because they hardly felt any difference of kind between themselves and the animals, the worship of Dionysus kept always this feeling of kinship with wild things. The beautiful side of this feeling is vividly conspicuous in *The Bacchae*. And the horrible side is not in the least concealed.

A curious relic of primitive superstition and cruelty remained firmly imbedded in Orphism—a doctrine irrational and unintelligible, and for that very reason wrapped in the deepest and most sacred mystery : a belief in the sacrifice of Dionysus himself, and the purification of man by his blood.

It seems possible that the savage Thracians, in the fury of their worship on the mountains, when they were possessed by the God and became "wild beasts," actually tore with their teeth and hands any hares, goats, fawns, or the like that they came across. There survives a constant tradition of inspired Bacchanals in their miraculous strength tearing even bulls asunder

sort of Dionysiac priest, not very enlightened, but ready to abate some of the extreme dogmas of his creed if he may keep the rest. Cadmus, quite a different character, takes a very human and earthly point of view: the God is probably a true God; but even if he is false, there is no great harm done, and the worship will bring renown to Thebes and the royal family. It is noteworthy how full of pity Cadmus is —the sympathetic kindliness of the sons of this world as contrasted with the pitilessness of gods and their devotees. See especially the last scenes of the play. Even his final outburst of despair at not dying like other men (p. 152), shows the same sympathetic humanity.

Pp. 89 ff., ll. 215–262.—Pentheus, though his case against the new worship is so good, and he might so easily have been made into a fine martyr, like Hippolytus, is left harsh and unpleasant, and very close in type to the ordinary "tyrant" of Greek tragedy (cf. p. 118). It is also noteworthy, I think, that he is, as it were, out of tone with the other characters. He belongs to a different atmosphere, like, to take a recent instance, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

P. 91, l. 263, Injurious King, &c.] — It is a mark of a certain yielding to stage convention in Euripides' later style, that he allows the Chorus Leader to make remarks which are not "asides," but are yet not heard or noticed by anybody.

P. 91, l. 264, Sower of the Giants' sod.]—Cadmus, by divine guidance, slew a dragon and sowed the teeth of it like seed in the "Field of Ares." From the teeth rose a harvest of Earth-born, or "Giant" warriors, of whom Echîon was one.

P. 92, l. 287, Learn the truth of it, cleared from the false.]—This timid essay in rationalism reminds one of similar efforts in Pindar (e.g. *Ol.* i.). It is the product of a religious and unspeculative mind, not feeling difficulties itself, but troubled by other people's questions and objections. (See above on Teiresias.)

P. 92, l. 292, The world-encircling Fire.] — This fire, or ether, was the ordinary material of which phantoms or apparitions were made.

Pp. 93–95, ll. 330–369.—These three speeches are very clearly contrasted. Cadmus, thoroughly human, thinking of sympathy and expediency, and vividly remembering the fate of his other grandson, Actaeon; Pentheus, angry and "tyrannical"; Teiresias speaking like a Christian priest of the Middle Ages, almost like Tennyson's Becket.

P. 95, l. 370.—The goddess Ὁσία, "Purity," seems to be one of the many abstractions which were half personified by philosophy and by Orphism. It is possible that the word is really adjectival, "Immaculate One," and originally an epithet of some more definite goddess, *e.g.* as Miss Harrison suggests, of Nemesis.

In this and other choruses it is very uncertain how the lines should be distributed between the whole chorus, the two semi-choruses, and the various individual choreutae.

Pp. 97–98, ll. 402–430.—For the meaning of these lines, see Introduction, pp. lxi, lxii.

P. 100, l. 471, These emblems.]—There were generally associated with mysteries, or special forms of worship, certain relics or sacred implements, without which the rites could not be performed. Cf. Hdt.

vii. 153, where Telines of Gela stole the sacred implements or emblems of the nether gods, so that no worship could be performed, and the town was, as it were, excommunicated.

P. 103, ll. 493 ff., *The soldiers cut off the tress.*]—The stage directions here are difficult. It is conceivable that none of Pentheus' threats are carried out at all; that the God mysteriously paralyses the hand that is lifted to take his rod without Pentheus himself knowing it. But I think it more likely that the humiliation of Dionysus is made, as far as externals go, complete, and that it is not till later that he begins to show his superhuman powers.

P. 104, l. 508, So let it be.]—The name Pentheus suggests 'mourner,' from *penthos*, 'mourning.'

P. 105, l. 519, Acheloüs' roaming daughter.]—Acheloüs was the Father of all Rivers.

P. 107, l. 556, In thine own Nysa.]—An unknown divine mountain, formed apparently to account for the second part of the name Dionysus.

P. 107, l. 571, Cross the Lydias, &c.]—These are rivers of Thrace which Dionysus must cross in his passage from the East, the Lydias, the Axios, and some other, perhaps the Haliacmon, which is called "the father-stream of story."

P. 108, l. 579, A Voice, a Voice.]—Bromios, the God of Many Voices—for, whatever the real derivation, the fifth-century Greeks certainly associated the name with *βρέμω*, 'to roar'—manifests himself as a voice here and below (p. 136).

Pp. 109–112, ll. 602–641, Ye Damsels of the Morning Hills, &c.]—This scene in longer metre always strikes me as a little unlike the style of Euripides, and inferior.

It may mark one of the parts left unfinished by the poet, and written in by his son. But it may be that I have not understood it.

P. 118, ll. 781 ff., Call all who spur the charger, &c.] —The typical 'Ercles vein' of the tragic tyrant.

Pp. 120–124, ll. 810 ff.—This scene of the 'hypnotising'—if one may use the word—of Pentheus probably depends much on the action, which, however, I have not ventured to prescribe. Pentheus seems to struggle against the process all through, to be amazed at himself for consenting, while constantly finding fresh reasons for doing so.

P. 121, l. 822, Am I a woman, then?]—The robe and coif were, in the original legend, marks of the Thracian dress worn by the Thracian followers of Dionysus, and notably by Orpheus. The tradition became fixed that Pentheus wore such a robe and coif; and to the Greeks of Euripides' time such a dress seemed to be a woman's. Hence this turn of the story (cf. above, p. 167).

P. 125, ll. 877–881.—The refrain of this chorus about the fawn is difficult to interpret. I have practically interpolated the third line ("To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait"), in order (1) to show the connection of ideas; (2) to make clearer the meaning (as I understand it) of the two Orphic formulæ, "What is beautiful is beloved for ever," and "A hand uplifted over the head of Hate." If I am wrong, the refrain is probably a mere cry for revenge, in the tone of the refrain, "Hither for doom and deed," on p. 132. It is one of the many passages where there is a sharp antagonism between the two spirits of the Chorus, first, as furious Bacchanals, and, secondly, as exponents of

the idealised Bacchic religion of Euripides, which is so strongly expressed in the rest of this wonderful lyric.

P. 127, l. 920, Is it a Wild Bull, this ?]—Pentheus, in his Bacchic possession, sees fitfully the mystic shapes of the God beneath the human disguise. This second-sight, the exaltation of spirit, and the feeling of supernatural strength come to Pentheus as they came to the two Old Men. But to them the change came peacefully and for good ; to Pentheus it comes by force, stormily and for evil, because his will was against the God.

P. 131, l. 976, O hounds raging and blind.]—*i.e.* Spirits of Madness. This lyric prepares us for what follows, especially for Agâvê's delusion, which otherwise might have been hard to understand. I have tried to keep the peculiar metre of the original, the dochmiac, with a few simple licences. The scheme is based on ⏑ ˉ ⏑ ˉ or ˉ ⏑⏑ ˉ ⏑ ˉ, the latter being much commoner.

P. 133, ll. 997–1011.—The greater part of this chorus is generally abandoned as unintelligible and corrupt. The last ten lines ("Knowledge, we are not foes," &c.) will, I think, make sense if we accept a very slight conjecture of my own, *ἀέντων*, "let them blow," instead of the impossible *ἀεὶ τῶν*. The four lines before that ("A strait pitiless mind," &c.) are an almost literal translation of the MS. reading, which, however, is incorrect in metre, and therefore cannot be exactly what Euripides wrote.

P. 134, l. 1036, And deem'st thou Thebes so beggared.]—The couplet is incomplete in the MS. But the sense needed is obvious.

P. 137, l. 1120, Let it not befall through sin of mine, &c.]—This note of unselfish feeling, of pity and humanity, becomes increasingly marked in all the victims of Dionysus towards the end of the play, and contrasts the more vividly with the God's pitilessness. Cadmus is always gentle, and always thinking of the sufferings of others; and, indeed, so is Agâvê, after her return to reason, though with more resentment against the oppressor.

Pp. 139–143, ll. 1165–1200.—This marvellous scene defies comment. But I may be excused for remarking (1) that the psychological change of the chorus is, to my mind, proved by the words of the original, and does not in the least depend on my interpolated stage directions; (2) the extraordinary exultation of Agâvê is part of her Bacchic possession. It is not to be supposed that, if she had really killed a lion, such joy would be the natural thing.

P. 141, *after* l. 1183, *The Leader tries to speak*, &c.]—It is also possible that by some error of a scribe two lines have been omitted in the MS. But I think the explanation given in the text more probable and more dramatic.

P. 142, l. 1195, And Pentheus, O Mother?]—The Leader mentions Pentheus, I suppose, in order deliberately to test Agâvê's delusion, to see if she is indeed utterly unconscious of the truth.

P. 146, l. 1267, More shining than before, &c.]—The sight of the pure heaven brings back light to her mind—that is clear. But does she mean that the sky is brighter because of her madness which still remains, or that it is brighter now, after having been darkened in her madness?

P. 149, l. 1313, And now I fare forth in dishonour.] —He has not yet been sentenced to exile, though he might well judge that after such pollution all his family would be banished. But probably this is another mark of the unrevised state of the play.

P. 151, l. 1330, For thou must change and be a Serpent Thing, &c.]—A prophecy like this is a very common occurrence in the last scenes of Euripides' tragedies. "The subject of the play is really a long chain of events. The poet fixes on some portion of it—the action of one day, generally speaking—and treats it as a piece of vivid concrete life, led up to by a merely narrative introduction (the Prologue), and melting away into a merely narrative close. The method is to our taste undramatic, but it is explicable enough. It falls in with the tendency of Greek art to finish, not with a climax, but with a lessening of strain" (*Greek Literature*, p. 267).

The prophecy was that Cadmus and Harmonia should be changed into serpents and should lead a host of barbarian invaders—identified with an Illyrian tribe, the Encheleis—against Hellas; they should prosper until they laid hands on the treasures of Delphi, and then be destroyed. Herodotus says that the Persians were influenced by this prophecy when they refrained from attacking Delphi (Hdt. ix. 42).

DANCE OF MAENADS TO DIONYSUS

THE FROGS
OF
ARISTOPHANES

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

THE GOD DIONYSUS.

XANTHIAS, *his slave.*

AESCHYLUS.

EURIPIDES.

HERACLES.

PLUTO.

CHARON.

AEACUS, *house porter to Pluto.*

A CORPSE.

A MAIDSERVANT OF PERSEPHONE.

A LANDLADY *in Hades.*

PLATHANE, *her servant.*

A CHORUS OF FROGS.

A CHORUS OF INITIATED PERSONS.

Attendants at a Funeral; Women worshipping Iacchus; Servants of Pluto, &c.

"*The play was first produced in Athens at the Feast of the Lenaea in the year* 405 B.C. *It obtained the first prize. Phrynichus was second with* '*The Muses*,' *Plato third with* '*The Cleophon*.'"

THE FROGS

At the back of the scene is the house of HERACLES. *Enter* DIONYSUS, *disguised as* HERACLES, *with lion-skin and club, but with the high boots of tragedy and a tunic of saffron silk. He is followed by* XANTHIAS, *seated on a donkey and carrying an immense bale of luggage on a porter's pole. They advance for a while in silence.*

XANTHIAS

(*looking round at his burden with a groan*).

Sir, shall I say one of the regular things
That people in a theatre always laugh at?

DIONYSUS.

Say what you like, except "I'm overloaded."
But mind, not that. That's simply wormwood to me.

XANTHIAS (*disappointed*).

Not anything funny?

DIONYSUS.

Not "Oh, my poor blisters!"

XANTHIAS.

Suppose I made the great joke?

DIONYSUS.

Why, by all means.

Don't be afraid. Only, for mercy's sake,
Don't . . .

XANTHIAS.

Don't do what?

DIONYSUS.

Don't shift your luggage pole
Across, and say, "I want to blow my nose."

XANTHIAS (*greatly disappointed*).

Nor, that I've got such a weight upon my back
That unless some one helps me quickly I shall sneeze?

DIONYSUS.

Oh, please, no. Keep it till I need emetics.

XANTHIAS.

Then what's the good of carrying all this lumber
If I mayn't make one single good old wheeze
Like Phrynichus, Ameipsias, and Lykis?

DIONYSUS.

Ah no; don't make them.—When I sit down there
[*Pointing to the auditorium.*
And hear some of those choice products, I go home
A twelvemonth older.

XANTHIAS (*to himself*).

Oh, my poor old neck:
Blistered all round, and mustn't say it's blistered,
Because that's funny!

DIONYSUS.

Airs and insolence!
When I, Dionysus, child of the Great Jug,

Must work and walk myself, and have him riding
Lest he should tire himself or carry things!

XANTHIAS.

Am I not carrying things?

DIONYSUS.

They're carrying you.

XANTHIAS (*showing the baggage*).

I'm carrying this.

DIONYSUS.

How?

XANTHIAS.

With my back half-broken.

DIONYSUS.

That bag is clearly carried by a donkey.

XANTHIAS.

No donkey carries bags that *I* am carrying.

DIONYSUS.

I suppose you know the donkey's carrying *you*.

XANTHIAS (*turning cross*).

I don't. I only know my shoulder's sore!

DIONYSUS.

Well, if it does no good to ride the donkey,
Go turns, and let the poor beast ride on you.

XANTHIAS (*aside*).

Just like my luck.—Why wasn't I on board
At Arginusae? Then I'd let you have it.

DIONYSUS.

Dismount, you rascal.—Here's the door close by
Where I must turn in first—and I on foot! (*Knocking.*
Porter! Hi, porter! Hi!

HERACLES (*entering from the house*).

Who's knocking there?
More like a mad bull butting at the door,
Whoever he is . . . (*seeing* DIONYSUS). God bless us,
what's all this?
[*He examines* DIONYSUS *minutely, then chokes with silent emotion.*

DIONYSUS (*aside to* XANTHIAS).

Boy!

XANTHIAS.

What, sir?

DIONYSUS.

Did you notice?

XANTHIAS.

Notice what?

DIONYSUS.

The man's afraid.

XANTHIAS.

Yes, sir; (*aside*) afraid you're cracked!

HERACLES (*struggling with laughter*).

I wouldn't if I possibly could help it:
I'm trying to bite my lips, but all the same . . . (*roars with laughter*).

DIONYSUS.

Don't be absurd! Come here. I want something.

HERACLES.

I would, but I can't yet shake this laughter off:
The lion-skin on a robe of saffron silk!
How comes my club to sort with high-heeled boots?
What's the idea? Where have you come from now?

DIONYSUS.

I've been at sea, serving with Cleisthenes.

HERACLES.

You fought a battle?

DIONYSUS.

Yes: sank several ships,
Some twelve or thirteen.

HERACLES.

Just you two?

DIONYSUS.

Of course.

XANTHIAS (*aside*).

And then I woke, and it was all a dream!

DIONYSUS.

Well, one day I was sitting there on deck
Reading the *Andromeda*, when all at once
A great desire came knocking at my heart,
You'd hardly think . . .

HERACLES.

A great desire? How big?

DIONYSUS.

Oh, not so big. Perhaps as large as Molon.

HERACLES.

Who was the lady?

DIONYSUS.

Lady?

HERACLES.

Well, the girl?

DIONYSUS.

Great Heaven, there wasn't one!

HERACLES.

Well, I have always
Considered Cleisthenes a perfect lady!

DIONYSUS.

Don't mock me, brother! It's a serious thing,
A passion that has worn me to a shadow.

HERACLES.

Well, tell us all about it.

DIONYSUS

(*with the despair of an artist explaining himself to a common athlete*).

No; I can't.
You never . . . But I'll think of an analogy.
You never felt a sudden inward craving
For . . . pease-broth?

HERACLES.

Pease-broth? Bless me, crowds of times.

DIONYSUS.

See'st then the sudden truth? Or shall I put it
Another way?

HERACLES.

Oh, not about pease-broth.
I see it quite.

DIONYSUS.

Well, I am now consumed
By just that sort of restless craving for
Euripides.

HERACLES.

Lord save us, the man's dead!

DIONYSUS.

He is; and no one in this world shall stop me
From going to see him!

HERACLES.

Down to the place of shades?

DIONYSUS.

The place of shades or any shadier still.

HERACLES.

What do you want to get?

DIONYSUS.

I want a poet,
For most be dead; only the false live on.

HERACLES.

Iophon's still alive.

DIONYSUS.

Well, there you have it;

The one good thing still left us, if it is one.
For even as to that I have my doubts.

HERACLES.

But say, why don't you bring up Sophocles
By preference, if you must have some one back?

DIONYSUS.

No, not till I've had Iophon quite alone
And seen what note he gives without his father.
Besides, Euripides, being full of tricks,
Would give the slip to his master, if need were,
And try to escape with me; while Sophocles,
Content with us, will be content in Hell.

HERACLES.

And Agathon, where is he?

DIONYSUS.

Gone far away,
A poet true, whom many friends regret.

HERACLES.

Beshrew him! Where?

DIONYSUS.

To feast with peaceful kings!

HERACLES.

And Xenocles?

DIONYSUS.

Oh, plague take Xenocles!

HERACLES.

Pythangelus, then?

[DIONYSUS *shrugs his shoulders in expressive silence.*

XANTHIAS (*to himself*).

And no one thinks of me,
When all my shoulder's skinning, simply skinning.

HERACLES.

But aren't there other pretty fellows there
All writing tragedies by tens of thousands,
And miles verboser than Euripides?

DIONYSUS.

Leaves without fruit; trills in the empty air,
And starling chatter, mutilating art!
Give them one chance and that's the end of them,
One weak assault on an unprotected Muse.
Search as you will, you'll find no poet now
With grit in him, to wake a word of power.

HERACLES.

How "grit"?

DIONYSUS.

The grit that gives them heart to risk
Bold things—vast Ether, residence of God,
Or Time's long foot, or souls that won't take oaths
While tongues go swearing falsely by themselves.

HERACLES.

You like that stuff?

DIONYSUS.

Like it? I rave about it.

HERACLES (*reflecting*).

Why, yes; it's devilish tricky, as you say.

DIONYSUS.

"Ride not upon my soul!" Use your own donkey.

HERACLES (*apologising*).

I only meant it was obviously humbug!

DIONYSUS.

If ever I need advice about a *dinner*,
I'll come to you!

XANTHIAS (*to himself*).

And no one thinks of me.

DIONYSUS.

But why I came in these especial trappings—
Disguised as you, in fact—was this. I want you
To tell me all the hosts with whom you stayed
That time you went to fetch up Cerberus:
Tell me your hosts, your harbours, bakers' shops,
Inns, taverns—reputable and otherwise—
Springs, roads, towns, posts, and landladies that keep
The fewest fleas.

XANTHIAS (*as before*).

And no one thinks of me!

HERACLES (*impressively*).

Bold man, and will you dare . . .

DIONYSUS.

Now, don't begin
That sort of thing; but tell the two of us
What road will take us quickest down to Hades.—
And, please, no great extremes of heat or cold.

HERACLES.

Well, which one had I better tell you first?—

Which now?—Ah, yes; suppose you got a boatman
To tug you, with a hawser—round your neck . . .

DIONYSUS.

A chokey sort of journey, that.

HERACLES.

Well, then,
There *is* a short road, quick and smooth, the surface
Well pounded—in a mortar.

DIONYSUS.

The hemlock way?

HERACLES.

Exactly.

DIONYSUS.

Cold and bitter! Why, it freezes
All your shins numb.

HERACLES.

Do you mind one short and steep?

DIONYSUS.

Not in the least . . . You know I'm no great walker.

HERACLES.

Then just stroll down to Cerameicus . . .

DIONYSUS.

Well?

HERACLES.

Climb up the big tower . . .

DIONYSUS.

Good; and then?

HERACLES.

Then watch
And see them start the torch-race down below;
Lean over till you hear the men say "Go,"
And then, go.

DIONYSUS.

Where?

HERACLES.

Why, over.

DIONYSUS.

Not for me.
It'd cost me two whole sausage bags of brains.
I won't go that way.

HERACLES.

Well, how *will* you go?

DIONYSUS.

The way *you* went that time.

HERACLES (*impressively*).

The voyage is long.
You first come to a great mere, fathomless
And very wide.

DIONYSUS (*unimpressed*).

How do I get across?

HERACLES (*with a gesture*).

In a little boat, like that; an aged man
Will row you across the ferry . . . for two obols.

DIONYSUS.

Those two old obols, everywhere at work!
I wonder how they found their way down there?

HERACLES.

Oh, Theseus took them!—After that you'll see
Snakes and queer monsters, crowds and crowds.

DIONYSUS.

Now don't:
Don't play at bogies! You can never move me!

HERACLES.

Then deep, deep mire and everlasting filth,
And, wallowing there, such as have wronged a guest,
Or picked a wench's pocket while they kissed her,
Beaten their mothers, smacked their fathers' jaws,
Or sworn perjurious oaths before high heaven.

DIONYSUS.

And with them, I should hope, such as have learned
Kinesias's latest Battle Dance,
Or copied out a speech of Morsimus!

HERACLES.

Then you will find a breath about your ears
Of music, and a light before your eyes
Most beautiful—like this—and myrtle groves,
And joyous throngs of women and of men,
And clapping of glad hands.

DIONYSUS.

And who will *they* be?

HERACLES.

The Initiated.

XANTHIAS (*aside*).

Yes; and I'm the donkey
Holiday-making at the Mysteries!
But I won't stand this weight one moment longer.
[*He begins to put down his bundle.*

HERACLES.

And they will forthwith tell you all you seek.
They have their dwelling just beside the road,
At Pluto's very door.—So now good-bye;
And a pleasant journey, brother.

DIONYSUS.

Thanks; good-bye.
Take care of yourself. (*To* XANTHIAS, *while* HERACLES *returns into the house*) Take up the bags again.

XANTHIAS.

Before I've put them down?

DIONYSUS.

Yes, and be quick.

XANTHIAS.

No, really, sir; we ought to hire a porter.

DIONYSUS.

And what if I can't find one?

XANTHIAS.

Then I'll go.

DIONYSUS.

All right.—Why, here's a funeral, just in time.
[*Enter a* FUNERAL *on the right.*
Here, sir—it's you I'm addressing—the defunct;
Do you care to carry a few traps to Hades?

THE CORPSE (*sitting up*).

How heavy?

DIONYSUS.

What you see.

CORPSE.

You'll pay two drachmas?

DIONYSUS.

Oh, come, that's rather much.

CORPSE.

Bearers, move on!

DIONYSUS.

My good man, wait! See if we can't arrange.

CORPSE.

Two drachmas down, or else don't talk to me.

DIONYSUS.

Nine obols?

CORPSE (*lying down again*).

Strike me living if I will!
[*Exit the* FUNERAL.

XANTHIAS.

That dog's too proud! He'll come to a bad end.—
Well, I'll be porter.

DIONYSUS.

That's a good brave fellow.

[*They walk on for some time. The scene changes, a desolate lake taking the place of the house.* DIONYSUS *peers into the distance.*

DIONYSUS.

What *is* that?

XANTHIAS.

That? A lake.

DIONYSUS.

By Zeus, it is!
The mere he spoke of.

XANTHIAS.

Yes; I see a boat.

DIONYSUS.

Yes; by the powers!

XANTHIAS.

And yonder must be Charon.

DIONYSUS.

Charon, ahoy!

BOTH.

Ahoy! Charon, ahoy!

CHARON

(*approaching in the boat. He is an old, grim, and squalid Ferryman, wearing a slave's felt cap and a sleeveless tunic*).

Who is for rest from sufferings and cares?
Who's for the Carrion Crows, and the Dead Donkeys;
Lethe and Sparta and the rest of Hell?

DIONYSUS.

I!

CHARON.

Get in.

DIONYSUS.

Where do you touch? The Carrion Crows,
You said?

CHARON (*gruffly*).

The Dogs will be the place for you.
Get in.

DIONYSUS.

Come, Xanthias.

CHARON.

I don't take slaves:
Unless he has won his freedom? Did he fight
The battle of the Cold Meat Unpreserved?

XANTHIAS.

Well, no; my eyes were very sore just then . . .

CHARON.

Then trot round on your legs!

XANTHIAS.

Where shall I meet you?

CHARON.

At the Cold Seat beside the Blasting Stone.

DIONYSUS (*to* XANTHIAS, *who hesitates*).

You understand?

XANTHIAS.

Oh, quite. (*Aside*) Just like my luck.
What can have crossed me when I started out?

[*Exit* XANTHIAS.

CHARON.

Sit to your oar (DIONYSUS *does his best to obey*). Any more passengers?
If so, make haste. (*To* DIONYSUS) What are you doing there?

DIONYSUS.

Why, what you told me; sitting on my oar.

CHARON.

Oh, are you? Well, get up again and sit

[*Pushing him down.*

Down there—fatty!

DIONYSUS (*doing everything wrong*).

Like that?

CHARON.

Put out your arms
And stretch . . .

DIONYSUS.

Like that?

CHARON.

None of your nonsense here!
Put both your feet against the stretcher.—Now,
In good time, row!

DIONYSUS (*fluently, putting down his oars*).

And how do you expect

A man like me, with no experience,
No seamanship, no Salamis,—to row?

CHARON.

You'll row all right; as soon as you fall to,
You'll hear a first-rate tune that *makes* you row.

DIONYSUS.

Who sings it?

CHARON.

Certain cycnoranidae.

That's music!

DIONYSUS.

Give the word then, and we'll see.

[CHARON *gives the word for rowing and marks the time. A Chorus of* FROGS *under the water is heard. The Feast of Pots to which they refer was the third day of the Anthesteria, and included songs to* DIONYSUS *at his temple in the district called Limnae* ("*Marshes*").

FROGS.

O brood of the mere and the spring,
Gather together and sing
From the depths of your throat
By the side of the boat,
Co-äx, as we move in a ring;

As in Limnae we sang the divine
Nyseïan Giver of Wine,
When the people in lots
With their sanctified Pots
Came reeling around my shrine.

Co-äx, co-äx, co-äx,
Brekekekex co-äx.

DIONYSUS.

Don't sing any more;
I begin to be sore!

FROGS.

Brekekekex co-äx.

Co-äx, co-äx, co-äx,
Brekekekex co-äx!

DIONYSUS.

Is it nothing to you
If I'm black and I'm blue?

FROGS.

Brekekekex co-äx!

DIONYSUS.

A plague on all of your swarming packs.
There's nothing in you except co-äx!

FROGS.

Well, and what more do you need?
Though it's none of your business indeed,
When the Muse thereanent
Is entirely content,
And horny-hoof Pan with his reed:

When Apollo is fain to admire
My voice, on account of his lyre
Which he frames with the rushes
And watery bushes—
Co-äx!—which I grow in the mire.

Co-äx, co-äx, co-äx,
Brekekekex co-äx!

DIONYSUS.

Peace, musical sisters!
I'm covered with blisters.

FROGS.

Brekekekex co-äx.

Co-äx, co-äx, co-äx,
Brekekekex co-äx!
Our song we can double
Without the least trouble:
Brekekekex co-äx.

Sing we now, if ever hopping
Through the sedge and flowering rushes;
In and out the sunshine flopping,
We have sported, rising, dropping,
With our song that nothing hushes.

Sing, if e'er in days of storm
Safe our native oozes bore us,
Staved the rain off, kept us warm,
Till we set our dance in form,
Raised our hubble-bubbling chorus:

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!

DIONYSUS.

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!
I can sing it as loud as you.

FROGS.

Sisters, that he never must do!

DIONYSUS.

Would you have me row till my shoulder cracks?

FROGS.

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!

DIONYSUS.

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!
Groan away till you burst your backs.
It's nothing to me.

FROGS.

Just wait till you see.

DIONYSUS.

I don't care how you scold.

FROGS.

Then all day long
We will croak you a song
As loud as our throats can hold.

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!!

DIONYSUS.

Brekekekex co-äx, co-äx!!
I'll see you don't outdo me in that.

FROGS.

Well, *you* shall never beat *us*—that's flat!

DIONYSUS.

I'll make you cease your song
If I shout for it all day long;
My lungs I'll tax
With co-äx, co-äx
—I assure you they're thoroughly strong—

Until your efforts at last relax :
Brekekekex co-ăx, co-ăx ! !
[*No answer from the Frogs.*
Brekekekex co-ăx, co-ăx ! ! !
I knew in the end I should stop your quacks !
[*The boat has now reached the further shore.*

CHARON.

Easy there ! Stop her ! Lay her alongside.—
Now pay your fare and go.

DIONYSUS.

There are the obols.
[DIONYSUS *gets out. The boat and* CHARON *disappear.* DIONYSUS *peers about him.*
Ho, Xanthias ! . . . Where's Xanthias ?—Is that you?

XANTHIAS (*from the darkness*).

Hullo !

DIONYSUS.

Come this way.

XANTHIAS (*entering*).

Oh, I'm glad to see you !

DIONYSUS (*looking round*).

Well, and what have we here ?

XANTHIAS.

Darkness—and mud.

DIONYSUS.

Did you see any of the perjurers here,
And father-beaters, as he said we should ?

XANTHIAS.

Why, didn't you?

DIONYSUS.

I? Lots.

[*Looking full at the audience.*

I see them now.

Well, what are we to do?

XANTHIAS.

Move further on.

This is the place he said was all aswarm
With horrid beasts.

DIONYSUS.

A plague on what he said!
Exaggerating just to frighten me,
Because he knew my courage and was jealous.
Naught lives so flown with pride as Heracles!
Why, my best wish would be to meet with something,
Some real adventure, worthy of our travels!

XANTHIAS (*listening*).

Stay!—Yes, upon my word. I hear a noise.

DIONYSUS (*nervously*).

God bless me, where?

XANTHIAS.

Behind.

DIONYSUS.

Go to the rear.

XANTHIAS.

No; it's in front somewhere.

DIONYSUS.

Then get in front.

XANTHIAS.

Why, there I see it.—Save us!—A great beast. . . .

DIONYSUS (*cowering behind* XANTHIAS).

What like?

XANTHIAS.

Horrid! . . . At least it keeps on changing!
It was a bull; now it's a mule; and now
A fair young girl.

DIONYSUS.

Where is it? Let me at it!

XANTHIAS.

Stay, sir; it's not a girl now, it's a dog.

DIONYSUS.

It must be Empusa!

XANTHIAS.

Yes. At least its head
Is all on fire.

DIONYSUS.

Has it a leg of brass?

XANTHIAS.

Yes, that it has. And the other leg of cow-dung.
It's she!

DIONYSUS.

Where shall I go?

XANTHIAS.

Well, where shall I?

DIONYSUS

(*running forward and addressing the Priest of* DIONYSUS *in his seat of state in the centre of the front row of the audience*).

My Priest, protect me and we'll sup together!

XANTHIAS.

We're done for, O Lord Heracles.

DIONYSUS (*cowering again*).

Oh, don't!

Don't shout like that, man, and don't breathe that name.

XANTHIAS.

Dionysus, then!

DIONYSUS.

No, no. That's worse than the other. . . .

Keep on the way you're going.

XANTHIAS (*after searching about*).

Come along, sir.

DIONYSUS.

What is it?

XANTHIAS.

Don't be afraid, sir. All goes well.

And we can say as said Hegelochus,

"Beyond these storms I catch a *piece* of *tail!*"

Empusa's gone.

DIONYSUS.

Swear it.

XANTHIAS.

By Zeus, she's gone!

DIONYSUS.

Again.

XANTHIAS.

By Zeus, she's gone!

DIONYSUS.

Your solemn oath.

XANTHIAS.

By Zeus!!

DIONYSUS (*raising himself*).

Dear me, that made me feel quite pale.

XANTHIAS (*pointing to the Priest*).

And this kind gentleman turned red for sympathy.

DIONYSUS.

How can I have sinned to bring all this upon me?
What power above is bent on my destruction?

XANTHIAS.

The residence of God, or Time's long foot?

DIONYSUS (*listening as flute-playing is heard outside*).

I say!

XANTHIAS.

What is it?

DIONYSUS.

Don't you hear it?

XANTHIAS.

What?

DIONYSUS.

Flutes blowing.

XANTHIAS.

Yes. And such a smell of torches
Floating towards us, all most Mystery-like!

DIONYSUS.

Crouch quietly down and let us hear the music.

[*They crouch down at the left. Music is heard far off.* XANTHIAS *puts down the bundle.*

CHORUS (*unseen*).

Iacchus, O Iacchus!
Iacchus, O Iacchus!

XANTHIAS.

That's it, sir. These are the Initiated
Rejoicing somewhere here, just as he told us.
Why, it's the old Iacchus hymn that used
To warm the cockles of Diagoras!

DIONYSUS.

Yes, it must be. However, we'd best sit
Quite still and listen, till we're sure of it.

[*There enters gradually the* CHORUS, *consisting of Men Initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries. They are led by a* HIEROPHANT *or Initiating Priest, and accompanied by a throng of Worshipping Women. They have white robes, wreaths upon their brows, and torches in their hands. During their entrance the back scene again changes. The lake disappears and we find ourselves in front of the house of Pluto.*

CHORUS.

Thou that dwellest in the shadow
Of great glory here beside us,
Spirit, Spirit, we have hied us
To thy dancing in the meadow!
Come, Iacchus; let thy brow
Toss its fruited myrtle bough;
We are thine, O happy dancer; O our comrade, come and guide us!
Let the mystic measure beat:
Come in riot fiery fleet;
Free and holy all before thee,
While the Charites adore thee,
And thy Mystae wait the music of thy feet!

XANTHIAS.

O Virgin of Demeter, highly blest,
What an entrancing smell of roasted pig!

DIONYSUS.

Hush! hold your tongue! Perhaps they'll give you some.

CHORUS.

Spirit, Spirit, lift the shaken
Splendour of thy tossing torches!
All the meadow flashes, scorches:
Up, Iacchus, and awaken!
Come, thou star that bringest light
To the darkness of our rite,
Till thine old men leap as young men, leap with every thought forsaken

Of the dulness and the fear
Left by many a circling year:
Let thy red light guide the dances
Where thy banded youth advances
To be merry by the blossoms of the mere!

[*All the* CHORUS *has now entered.*

HIEROPHANT. Leader of Chor.

Hush, oh hush! for our song begins. Let every one stand aside

Who owns an intellect muddled with sins, or in arts like these untried:

If the mystic rites of the Muses true he has never seen nor sung:

If he never the magical music knew of Cratînus the writer of comedies Bull-eater's tongue:

If he likes in a comedy nothing but riot and meaningless harlequinade:

Or in matters of politics cannot keep quiet and see that cabals be allayed,

But blows up spite and keeps it alight to serve his personal ends:

Or being in power at a critical hour, accepts little gifts from his friends:

Or goes selling a ship, or betraying a fort, or takes to the trade of a smuggler,

Attempting again, in Thorycion's sort,—that pestilent revenue-juggler,—

From Aegina before us to stock Epidaurus with tar and canvas and hide,

Or tries to persuade some friend in the trade for the enemy's ships to provide:

Or a teacher of choirs who forgets his position and
damages Hecate's shrines :
Or the robber of poets, the mere politician, who spites
us with pitiful fines
Because we have suitably made him absurd in the
God's traditional rhyme :
Behold, I give word : and again give word : and give
word for the third, last time :
Make room, all such, for our dance and song.—Up,
you, and give us a lay
That is meet for our mirth-making all night long and
for this great festival day.

CHORUS.

Forth fare all ;
This mead's bowers
Bear fresh flowers ;
Forth, I call.
Leap, mock, dance, play ;
Enough and to spare we have feasted to-day !

March : raise high
Her whose hands
Save these lands ;
Raise due cry :
Maid, Maid, save these,
Tho' it may not exactly Thorycion please !

HIEROPHANT.

One hymn to the Maiden ; now raise ye another
To the Queen of the Fruits of the Earth.
To Demeter the Corn-giver, Goddess and Mother,
Make worship in musical mirth.

CHORUS.

Approach, O Queen of orgies pure,
And us, thy faithful band, ensure
From morn to eve to ply secure
  Our mocking and our clowning:
To grace thy feast with many a hit
Of merry jest or serious wit,
And laugh, and earn the prize, and flit
  Triumphant to the crowning.

HIEROPHANT.

Now call the God of blooming mien;
  Raise the mystic chorus:
Our comrade he and guide unseen,
  With us and before us.

CHORUS.

Iacchus high in glory, thou whose day
Of all is merriest, hither, help our play;
  Show, as we throne thee at thy Maiden's side,
How light to thee are our long leagues of way.
  Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

Thyself, that poorest men thy joy should share,
Didst rend thy robe, thy royal sandal tear,
  That feet unshod might dance, and robes rent wide
Wave in thy revel with no after care.
  Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

Lo there! but now across the dance apace
A maiden tripped, a maiden fair of face,
  Whose tattered smock and kerchief scarce could hide
The merry bosom peering from its place.
  Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

XANTHIAS.

I always liked to follow some one else:
Suppose we join and dance?

DIONYSUS.

Why, so say I.

[*They join the Dance.*

HIEROPHANT.

[*These verses satirise Archedêmus, the politician, who has never succeeded in making out a clear Athenian pedigree for himself; Cleisthenes, who went into mourning for imaginary relatives lost at Arginusae; and Callias, the lady-killer, who professed a descent from Heracles, and wore a lion-skin in token thereof.*

Perhaps 'twill best beseem us
To deal with Archedêmus,
Who is toothless still and rootless, at seven years from birth:

CHORUS.

Yet he leads the public preachers
Of those poor dead upper creatures,
And is prince of all the shadiness on earth!

HIEROPHANT.

And Cleisthenes, says rumour,
In a wild despairing humour
Sits huddled up and tearing out his hair among the graves.

CHORUS.

To believe he would incline us
That a person named Sebînus
Is tossing yet unburied on the waves!

HIEROPHANT.

While Callias, says tattle,
Has attended a sea-battle,
And lionesses' scalps were the uniform he wore!

DIONYSUS (*to* THE HIEROPHANT).

You'd oblige us much by telling
Me the way to Pluto's dwelling.
We are strangers newly lighted on your shore.

HIEROPHANT.

No need of distant travel
That problem to unravel;
For know that while you ask me, you are standing at the door.

DIONYSUS (*to* XANTHIAS).

Then up, my lad, be packing!

XANTHIAS.

There's the Devil in the sacking:
It can't stay still a second on the floor!

HIEROPHANT.

Now onward through Demeter's ring
Through the leaves and flowers,
All who love her junketing,
All who know her powers!

Fare forward you, while I go here
With matron and with maiden,
To make their night-long roaming clear
With tossing torches laden.

CHORUS (*of Worshipping Women, as they file off*).

Then on 'mid the meadows deep,
Where thickest the rosebuds creep
And the dewdrops are pearliest:
A jubilant step advance
In our own, our eternal dance,
Till its joy the Glad Fates entrance
Who threaded it earliest.

For ours is the sunshine bright,
Yea, ours is the joy of light
All pure, without danger:
For we thine Elect have been,
Thy secrets our eyes have seen,
And our hearts we have guarded clean
Toward kinsman and stranger!

The HIEROPHANT *and the Worshipping Women go off. The Men remain, forming an ordinary Chorus.* DIONYSUS *approaches the central door.*

DIONYSUS.

I ought by rights to knock; but how, I wonder.
I don't know how they do knock in this country.

XANTHIAS.

Oh, don't waste time. Go in and do your best,
Like Heracles in heart as well as garb.

DIONYSUS (*knocking*).

Ho there!

[*The door opens and a Porter appears, whose dress shows him to be* AEACUS, *the Judge of the Dead.*

AEACUS.

Who summons?

DIONYSUS.

Heracles the Brave.

AEACUS.

Thou rash, impure, and most abandoned man,
Foul, inly foul, yea foulest upon earth,
Who harried our dog, Kerberus, choked him dumb,
Fled, vanished, and left me to bear the blame,
Who kept him!—Now I have thee on the hip!
So close the black encaverned rocks of Styx
And Acheronian crags a-drip with blood
Surround thee, and Cocytus' circling hounds,
And the hundred-headed serpent, that shall rend
Thy bowels asunder; to thy lungs shall cleave
The lamprey of Tartessus, and thy reins
And inmost entrails in one paste of gore
Teithrasian Gorgons gorge for evermore!
—To whom, even now, I speed my indignant course!

[*The Porter retires.*

DIONYSUS (*who has fallen prostrate*).

Please!

XANTHIAS.

What's the matter? Quick, get up again
Before they come and see you.

DIONYSUS.

But I feel
Faint.—Put a cold wet sponge against my heart.

XANTHIAS (*producing a sponge*).

There; you apply it.

DIONYSUS.

Thanks. Where is it?

XANTHIAS.

There.
[DIONYSUS *takes and applies it.*
Ye golden gods, is it there you keep your heart?

DIONYSUS.

The nervous shock made it go down and down!

XANTHIAS.

You *are* the greatest coward I ever saw,
Of gods or humans!

DIONYSUS.

I a coward?—I had
The presence of mind to ask you for a sponge.
Few had done more!

XANTHIAS.

Could any one do less?

DIONYSUS.

A coward would still be flat there, sniffing salts;
I rose, called for a sponge, and used the sponge.

XANTHIAS.

That *was* brave, by Poseidon!

DIONYSUS.

I should think so.—
And weren't *you* frightened at his awful threats
And language?

XANTHIAS.

I? I never cared a rap.

DIONYSUS.

Oh, you're a hero, aren't you?—and want glory.
Well, you be *me!* Put on this lion's hide
And take the club—if you're so dauntless-hearted.
I'll take my turn, and be your luggage-boy.

XANTHIAS.

Over with both of them! Of course I will.
[*He proceeds to put on the lion-skin.*
Now watch if Xanthias-Heracles turns faint,
Or shows the same "presence of mind," as you.

DIONYSUS.

The true Melitêan jail-bird, on my life! . . .
Well, I suppose I'd better take the luggage.
[*The exchange is just effected when the door again opens and there enters a* MAID OF PERSEPHONE.

MAID.

Dear Heracles, and is it you once more?
Come in! No sooner did my mistress learn
Your coming, than she set her bread to bake,
Set pots of split-pea porridge, two or three,
A-boiling, a whole ox upon the coals,
Cakes in the oven, and big buns.—Oh, come in.

XANTHIAS (*as* HERACLES).

She is very kind ; perhaps some other time.

MAID.

Oh, really ; but I mustn't let you go !
She's doing everything herself ! Braised game,
Spices and fruits and stoups of the sweetest wine—
Come in with me.

XANTHIAS.

Most kind, but . . .

MAID.

No excuses.
I won't let go.—A flute-player, very pretty,
Is waiting for you, and two or three such sweet
Young dancing girls.

XANTHIAS (*wavering*).

Did you say dancing girls ?

MAID.

Yes. Do come in.—They just were going to serve
The fish, and have the table lifted in.

XANTHIAS.

I will ! I'll chance it !—Go straight in and tell
Those dancing girls that Heracles is coming !
[*The* MAID *retires again.*
Here, boy, take up the bags and follow me.

DIONYSUS.

Stop, please !—You didn't take it seriously
When I just dressed you as Heracles for fun ?
You can't be so ridiculous, Xanthias.
Take up the bags at once and bring them in.

XANTHIAS.

What? Surely you don't mean to take away
Your own gift?

DIONYSUS.

Mean it? No; I'm doing it!
Off with that lion-skin, quick.

[*Begins to strip off the lion-skin by force.*

XANTHIAS.

Help! I'm assaulted . . .

[*Giving way.*

I leave it with the Gods!

DIONYSUS (*proceeding to dress himself again*).

The Gods, indeed!
What senseless vanity to expect to be
Alcmena's son, a mortal and a slave!

XANTHIAS.

Well, take it. I don't care.—The time may be,
God willing, when you'll feel the need of me!

CHORUS.

That's the way such points to settle,
Like a chief of tested mettle,
Weather-worn on many seas,
Not in one fixed pattern stopping,
Like a painted thing, but dropping
Always towards the side of ease.
'Tis this instinct for soft places,
To keep warm while others freeze,
Marks a man of gifts and graces,
Like our own Theramenes!

DIONYSUS.

Surely 'twould the matter worsen,
If I saw this low-bred person
On his cushions sprawling, so,
Served him drinking, watched him winking:—
If he knew what I was thinking—
And he would, for certain, know,
Being a mighty shrewd deviser
Of such fancies—with a blow
P'raps he'd loosen an incisor
From the forefront of my row!

[*During this song there has entered along the street a* LANDLADY, *who is soon followed by her servant,* PLATHANÊ.

LANDLADY.

Ho, Plathanê, here, I want you, Plathanê! . . .
Here is that scamp who came to the inn before,
Ate sixteen loaves of bread. . . .

PLATHANÊ.

Why, so it is:
The very man!

XANTHIAS (*aside*).

Here's fun for somebody.

LANDLADY.

And twenty plates of boiled meat, half-an-obol
At every gulp!

XANTHIAS (*as before*).

Some one'll catch it now!

LANDLADY.

And all that garlic.

DIONYSUS.

Nonsense, my good woman,
You don't know what you're saying.

PLATHANÊ.

Did you think
I wouldn't know you in those high-heeled boots?

LANDLADY.

And all the salt-fish I've not mentioned yet. . . .

PLATHANÊ (*to* LANDLADY).

No, you poor thing; and all the good fresh cheese
The man kept swallowing, and the baskets with it!

LANDLADY (*to* XANTHIAS).

And when he saw me coming for the money
Glared like a wild bull! Yes, and roared at me!

XANTHIAS.

Just what he does! His manners everywhere.

LANDLADY.

Tugged at his sword! Pretended to be mad!

PLATHANÊ.

Yes, you poor thing; I don't know how you bore it!

LANDLADY.

And we got all of a tremble, both of us,
And ran up the ladder to the loft! And he,
He tore the matting up—and off he went!

XANTHIAS.

Like him, again.

PLATHANÊ.

But something must be done!

LANDLADY (*to* PLATHANÊ).

Run, you, and fetch me my protector, Cleon.

PLATHANÊ

(*to the* LANDLADY, *as they run excitedly to go off in different directions*).

And you fetch me Hyperbolus, if you meet him. . . .
Then we shall crush him!

LANDLADY (*returning*).

Oh, that ugly jaw!
If I could throw a stone, I'ld like to break
Those wicked teeth that ground my larder dry!

PLATHANÊ (*returning on the other side*).

And I should like to fling you in the pit!

LANDLADY (*turning again as she goes off*).

And I should like to get a scythe, and cut
That throat that swallowed all my sausages.

PLATHANÊ (*the same*).

Well, I'll go straight to Cleon, and this same day
We'll worm them out in a law-court, come what may!

[*The* LANDLADY *and* PLATHANÊ *go off in different directions. A painful silence ensues. At length:*

DIONYSUS.

Plague take me! No friend left me in the world. . . .
Except old Xanthias!

XANTHIAS.

I know, I know!
We all see what you want. But that's enough!
I won't be Heracles.

DIONYSUS.

Now don't say that,
Xanthias—old boy!

XANTHIAS.

And how am I to be
Alcmena's son—a mortal and a slave?

DIONYSUS.

I know you're angry, and quite justly so.
Hit me if you like; I won't say one word back.
But, mark, if ever again in this wide world
I rob you of these clothes, destruction fall
On me myself, my wife, my little ones,—
And, if you like, on the old bat Archedêmus!

XANTHIAS.

That oath will do. I take it on those terms.

CHORUS.

Now 'tis yours to make repayment
For the honour of this raiment;
Wear it well, as erst you wore;
If it needs some renovating,
Think of whom you're personating,
Glare like Heracles and roar.
Else, if any fear you show, sir,
Any weakness at the core,
Any jesting, back you go, sir,
To the baggage as before!

XANTHIAS.

Thank you for your kind intention,
But I had some comprehension
Of the task I undertook.
Should the lion-skin make for profit,
He'll attempt to make me doff it—
That I know—by hook or crook.
Still I'll make my acting real,
Peppery gait and fiery look.
Ha! Here comes the great ordeal:
See the door. I'm sure it shook!

The central door opens and the Porter, AEACUS, *comes out with several ferocious-looking Thracian or Scythian constables.*

AEACUS.

Here, seize this dog-stealer and lead him forth
To justice, quick.

DIONYSUS (*imitating* XANTHIAS).

Here's fun for somebody.

XANTHIAS (*in a Heraclean attitude*).

Stop, zounds! Not one step more!

AEACUS.

You want to fight?
Ho, Ditylas, Skeblyas, and Pardokas,
Forward! Oblige this person with some fighting!

DIONYSUS

(*while the constables gradually overpower* XANTHIAS).

How shocking to assault the constables—
And stealing other people's things!

AEACUS.

Unnatural,
That's what I call it.

DIONYSUS.

Quite a pain to see.

XANTHIAS (*now overpowered and disarmed*).

Now, by Lord Zeus, if ever I've been here
Or stol'n from you the value of one hair,
You may take and hang me on the nearest tree! . . .
Now, listen: and I'll act quite fairly by you;
[*Suddenly indicating* DIONYSUS.
Take this poor boy, and put him to the question!
And if you find me guilty, hang me straight.

AEACUS.

What tortures do you allow?

XANTHIAS.

Use all you like.
Tie him in the ladder, hang him by the feet,
Whip off his skin with bristle-whips and rack him;
You might well try some vinegar up his nose,
And bricks upon his chest, and so on. Only
No scourges made of . . . leek or young shalott.

AEACUS.

A most frank offer, most frank.—If my treatment
Disables him, the value shall be paid.

XANTHIAS.

Don't mention it. Remove him and begin.

AEACUS.

Thank you, we'll do it here, that you may witness
Exactly what he says. (*To* DIONYSUS) Put down
your bundle,
And mind you tell the truth.

DIONYSUS

(*who has hitherto been speechless with horror, now bursting out*).

I warn all present,
To torture me is an illegal act,
Being immortal! And whoever does so
Must take the consequences.

AEACUS.

Why, who *are* you?

DIONYSUS.

The immortal Dionysus, son of Zeus;
And this my slave.

AEACUS (*to* XANTHIAS).

You hear his protest?

XANTHIAS.

Yes;
All the more reason, that, for whipping him;
If he's a real immortal he won't feel it.

DIONYSUS.

Well, but you claim to be immortal too;
They ought to give you just the same as me.

XANTHIAS.

That's fair enough. All right; whichever of us
You first find crying, or the least bit minding
Your whip, you're free to say he's no true god.

AEACUS.

Sir, you behave like a true gentleman ;
You come to justice of yourself !—Now then,
Strip, both.

XANTHIAS.

How will you test us ?

AEACUS.

Easily :
You'll each take whack and whack about.

XANTHIAS.

All right.

AEACUS (*striking* XANTHIAS).

There.

XANTHIAS (*controlling himself with an effort*).

Watch now, if you see me even wince.

AEACUS.

But I've already hit you !

XANTHIAS.

I think not.

AEACUS.

Upon my word, it looks as if I hadn't.
Well, now I'll go and whack the other.

[*Strikes* DIONYSUS.

DIONYSUS (*also controlling himself*).

When ?

AEACUS.

I've done it.

DIONYSUS (*with an air of indifference*).

Odd, it didn't make me sneeze !

AEACUS.

It *is* odd !—Well, I'll try the first again.
[*He crosses to* XANTHIAS.

XANTHIAS.

All right. Be quick. (*The blow falls*) Whe-ew !

AEACUS.

Ah, why "whe-ew" ?
It didn't hurt you ?

XANTHIAS (*recovering himself*).

No ; I just was thinking
When my Diomean Feast would next be due.

AEACUS.

A holy thought !—I'll step across again.
[*Strikes* DIONYSUS, *who howls.*

DIONYSUS.

Ow-ow !

AEACUS.

What's that ?

DIONYSUS (*recovering himself*).

I saw some cavalry.

AEACUS.

What makes your eyes run ?

DIONYSUS.

There's a smell of onions !

AEACUS.

You're sure it didn't hurt you ?

DIONYSUS.

Hurt? Not it.

AEACUS.

I'll step across again then to the first one.

[*Strikes* XANTHIAS, *who also howls.*

XANTHIAS.

Hi-i!

AEACUS.

What is it now?

XANTHIAS.

Take out that thorn.

[*Pointing to his foot.*

AEACUS.

What does it mean?—Over we go again.

[*Strikes* DIONYSUS.

DIONYSUS

(*hurriedly turning his wail into a line of poetry*).

O Lord! . . . "of Delos or of Pytho's rock."

XANTHIAS (*triumphantly*).

It hurts. You heard?

DIONYSUS.

It doesn't! I was saying
A verse of old Hippônax to myself.

XANTHIAS.

You're making nothing of it. Hit him hard
Across the soft parts underneath the ribs.

AEACUS (*to* XANTHIAS).

A good idea! Turn over on your back!

[*Strikes him.*

XANTHIAS (*as before*).

O Lord!

DIONYSUS.

It hurts!

XANTHIAS (*as though continuing*).

"Poseidon ruler free
Of cliffs Aegean and the grey salt sea."

AEACUS.

Now, by Demeter, it's beyond my powers
To tell which one of you's a god!—Come in;
We'll ask my master. He and Persephassa
Will easily know you, being gods themselves.

DIONYSUS.

Most wisely said. Indeed I could have wished
You'd thought of that before you had me swished.

[*They all go into the house. The* CHORUS, *left alone on the stage, turns towards the audience.*

CHORUS.

Semi-Chorus I.

Draw near, O Muse, to the spell of my song,
Set foot in the sanctified place,
And see thy faithful Athenians throng,
To whom the myriad arts belong,
The myriad marks of grace,

Greater than Cleophon's own,
On whose lips, with bilingual moan,
A swallow from Thrace
Has taken his place
And chirps in blood-curdling tone

On the Gibberish Tree's thick branches high
As he utters a nightingale note,
A tumultuous cry
That he's certain to die
Even with an equal vote!

One of the Leaders.

It behoves this sacred Chorus, in its wisdom and its bliss,
To assist the state with counsel. Now our first advice is this:
Let Athenians all stand equal; penal laws be swept away.
Some of us have been misguided, following Phrynichus astray;
Now for all of these, we urge you, let full freedom be decreed
To confess the cause that tripped them and blot out that old misdeed.
Next, no man should live in Athens outcast, robbed of every right.
Shame it is that low-born aliens, just for sharing one sea-fight,
Should forthwith become 'Plataeans' and instead of slaves be masters—
(Not that in the least I blame you for thus meeting our disasters;
No; I pay respectful homage to the one wise thing you've done):
But remember these men also, your own kinsmen, sire and son,

Who have ofttimes fought beside you, spilt their blood
on many seas:
Grant for that one fault the pardon which they crave
you on their knees.
You whom Nature made for wisdom, let your ven-
geance fall to sleep;
Greet as kinsmen and Athenians, burghers true to
win and keep,
Whosoe'er will brave the storms and fight for Athens
at your side!
But be sure, if still we spurn them, if we wrap us in
our pride,
Stand alone, with Athens tossing in the long arm
of the waves,
Men in days to come shall wonder, and not praise
you in your graves.

Semi-Chorus II.

An' I the make of a man may trow,
And the ways that lead to a fall,
Not long will the ape that troubles us now,
Not long little Cleigenes—champion, I vow,
Of rascally washermen all,

Who hold over soap their sway
And lye and Cimolian clay,
(Which they thriftily mix
With the scrapings of bricks)—
Not long will our little one stay!
Oh, 'tis well he is warlike and ready to kick
For if once home from supper he trotted,
Talking genially thick
And without his big stick,
We should probably find him garotted.

The Other Leader.

It has often struck our notice that the course our city runs
Is the same towards men and money.—She has true and worthy sons:
She has good and ancient silver, she has good and recent gold.
These are coins untouched with alloys; everywhere their fame is told;
Not all Hellas holds their equal, not all Barbary far and near,
Gold or silver, each well minted, tested each and ringing clear.
Yet, we never use them! Others always pass from hand to hand,
Sorry brass just struck last week and branded with a wretched brand.
So with men we know for upright, blameless lives and noble names,
Trained in music and palaestra, freemen's choirs and freemen's games,
These we spurn for men of brass, for red-haired things of unknown breed,
Rascal cubs of mongrel fathers—them we use at every need!
Creatures just arrived in Athens, whom our city, years ago,
Scarcely would have used as scapegoats to be slaughtered for a show!
Even now, O race demented, there is time to change your ways;
Use once more what's worth the using. If we 'scape, the more the praise

That we fought our fight with wisdom ; or, if all is
lost for good,
Let the tree on which they hang us, be, at least, of
decent wood !

[*The door opens, and the two slaves,* AEACUS *and* XANTHIAS, *return.*

AEACUS.

By Zeus, that's what I call a gentleman !
That master of yours !

XANTHIAS.

Gentleman ? That he is !
There's nothing in his head but wine and wenches !

AEACUS.

But not to whip you when you were clean convicted,
A slave caught masquerading as his master !

XANTHIAS (*significantly*).

I'd like to see him try it !

AEACUS.

There you go !
The old slave trick, that I'm so fond of too.

XANTHIAS.

You like it, eh ?

AEACUS.

Like it ? Why, when I get
Behind my master's back and quietly curse him,
I feel just like the Blessèd in the Mysteries !

XANTHIAS.

What about muttering as you go outside
After a whacking?

AEACUS.

Yes; I like that too.

XANTHIAS (*with increasing excitement*).

And prying into people's secrets, eh?

AEACUS (*the same*).

By Zeus, there's nothing like it in the world!

XANTHIAS.

Oh, Zeus makes brethren meet!—And what of list'ning
To what the masters say?

AEACUS.

It makes me mad!

XANTHIAS.

And telling every word of it to strangers?

AEACUS.

Madder than mad, stark staring crimson madder!

XANTHIAS.

O Lord Apollo, clap your right hand there,
Give me your cheek to kiss, and you kiss me!
[*They embrace; a loud noise is heard inside the house.*
But Zeus!—our own Zeus of the Friendly Jailbirds—
What is that noise . . . those shouts and quarrelling . .
Inside?

AEACUS.

That? Aeschylus and Euripides!

XANTHIAS.

Eh?

AEACUS.

Yes; there's a big business just astir,
And hot dissension among all the dead.

XANTHIAS.

About what?

AEACUS.

There's a law established here
Concerning all the large and liberal arts,
Which grants the foremost master in each art
Free entertainment at the Central Hearth,
And also a special throne in Pluto's row . . .

XANTHIAS.

Oh, now I understand!

AEACUS.

To hold until
There comes one greater; then he must make way.

XANTHIAS.

But how has this affected Aeschylus?

AEACUS.

Aeschylus held the throne of tragedy,
As greatest . . .

XANTHIAS.

Held it? Why, who holds it now?

AEACUS.

Well, when Euripides came down, he gave
Free exhibitions to our choicest thieves,
Footpads, cut-purses, burglars, father-beaters,
—Of whom we have numbers here; and when they heard
The neat retorts, the fencing, and the twists,
They all went mad and thought him something splendid.
And he, growing proud, laid hands upon the throne
Where Aeschylus sat.

XANTHIAS.

And wasn't pelted off?

AEACUS.

Not he. The whole folk clamoured for a trial
To see which most was master of his craft.

XANTHIAS.

The whole jail-folk?

AEACUS.

Exactly;—loud as trumpets.

XANTHIAS.

And were there none to fight for Aeschylus?

AEACUS.

Goodness is scarce, you know. (*Indicating the audience*) The same as here!

XANTHIAS.

And what does Pluto mean to do about it?

AEACUS.

Why, hold a trial and contest on the spot
To test their skill for certain.

XANTHIAS (*reflecting*).

But, I say,
Sophocles surely must have claimed the throne?

AEACUS.

Not he; as soon as ever he came down,
He kissed old Aeschylus, and wrung his hand,
And Aeschylus made room on half his seat.
And now he means to wait—or so, at least,
Clidemides informs us—in reserve.
If Aeschylus wins the day, he'll rest content:
If not, why then, he says, for poor Art's sake,
He must show fight against Euripides!

XANTHIAS.

It is to be, then?

AEACUS.

Certainly, quite soon.
Just where you stand we'll have the shock of war.
They'll weigh the poetry line by line . . .

XANTHIAS.

Poor thing,
A lamb set in the meat-scale and found wanting!

AEACUS.

They'll bring straight-edges out, and cubit-rules,
And folded cube-frames . . .

XANTHIAS.

Is it bricks they want?

AEACUS.

And mitre-squares and wedges! Line by line
Euripides will test all tragedies!

XANTHIAS.

That must make Aeschylus angry, I should think?

AEACUS.

Well, he did stoop and glower like a mad bull.

XANTHIAS.

Who'll be the judge?

AEACUS.

That was a difficulty.
Both found an utter dearth of proper critics;
For Aeschylus objected to the Athenians. . . .

XANTHIAS.

Perhaps he thought the jail-folk rather many?

AEACUS.

And all the world beside, he thought mere dirt
At seeing what kind of thing a poet was.
So, in the end, they fixed upon your master
As having much experience in the business.
But come in; when the master's face looks grave
There's mostly trouble coming for the slave.

[*They go into the house.*

CHORUS

(*the song is a parody of the metre and style of* AESCHYLUS).

Eftsoons shall dire anger interne be the Thunderer's portion
When his foe's glib tusk fresh whetted for blood he descries;
Then fell shall his heart be, and mad; and a pallid distortion
Descend as a cloud on his eyes.

Yea, words with plumes wild on the wind and with helmets a-glancing,
With axles a-splinter and marble a-shiver, eftsoons
Shall bleed, as a man meets the shock of a Thought-builder's prancing
Stanzas of dusky dragoons.

The deep crest of his mane shall uprise as he slowly unlimbers
The long-drawn wrath of his brow, and lets loose with a roar
Epithets welded and screwed, like new torrent-swept timbers
Blown loose by a giant at war.

Then rises the man of the Mouth; then battleward flashes
A tester of verses, a smooth and serpentine tongue,
To dissect each phrase into mincemeat, and argue to ashes
That high-towered labour of lung!

The door opens again. Enter EURIPIDES, DIONYSUS, *and* AESCHYLUS.

EURIPIDES.

Pray, no advice to me! I won't give way;
I claim that I'm more master of my art.

DIONYSUS.

You hear him, Aeschylus. Why don't you speak?

EURIPIDES.

He wants to open with an awful silence—
The blood-curdling reserve of his first scenes.

DIONYSUS.

My dear sir, I must beg! Control your language

EURIPIDES.

I know him; I've seen through him years ago;
Bard of the "noble savage," wooden-mouthed,
No door, no bolt, no bridle to his tongue,
A torrent of pure bombast—tied in bundles!

AESCHYLUS (*breaking out*).

How say'st thou, Son o' the goddess of the Greens?—
You dare speak thus of me, you phrase-collector,
Blind-beggar-bard and scum of rifled rag-bags!
Oh, you shall rue it!

DIONYSUS.

Stop! Stop, Aeschylus;
Strike not thine heart to fire on rancour old.

AESCHYLUS.

No; I'll expose this crutch-and-cripple playwright,
And what he's worth for all his insolence.

DIONYSUS (*to attendants*).

A lamb, a black lamb, quick, boys! Bring it out
To sacrifice; a hurricane's let loose!

AESCHYLUS (*to* EURIPIDES).

You and your Cretan dancing-solos! You
And the ugly amours that you set to verse!

DIONYSUS (*interposing*).

One moment, please, most noble Aeschylus!
And you, poor wretch, if you have any prudence,

Get out of the hailstones quick, or else, by Zeus,
Some word as big as your head will catch you crash
Behind the ear, and knock out all the . . . Telephus!
Nay, Aeschylus, pray, pray control your anger;
Examine and submit to be examined
With a cool head. Two poets should not meet
In fishwife style; but here are you, straight off,
Ablaze and roaring like an oak on fire.

EURIPIDES.

For my part I'm quite ready, with no shrinking,
To bite first or be bitten, as he pleases.
Here are my dialogue, music, and construction;
Here's Peleus at your service, Meleâger,
And Aeolus, and . . . yes, Telephus, by all means!

DIONYSUS.

Do you consent to the trial, Aeschylus? Speak.

AESCHYLUS.

I well might take objection to the place;
It's no fair field for him and me.

DIONYSUS.

Why not?

AESCHYLUS.

Because my writings haven't died with me,
As his have; so he'll have them all to hand. . . .
However, I waive the point, if you think fit.

DIONYSUS.

Go, some one, bring me frankincense and fire
That I may pray for guidance, to decide
This contest in the Muses' strictest ways;
To whom, meantime, uplift your hymn of praise!

CHORUS

(*while preparations are made for the sacrifice*).

All hail, ye nine heaven-born virginal Muses,
Whiche'er of ye watch o'er the manners and uses
Of the Founts of Quotation, when, meeting in fray—
All hearts drawn tense for who wins and who loses—
With wrestling lithe each the other confuses,
Look on the pair that do battle to-day!
These be the men to take poems apart
By chopping, riving, sawing;
Here is the ultimate trial of Art
To due completion drawing!

DIONYSUS.

Won't you two pray before you show your lines?

AESCHYLUS (*going up to the altar*).

Demeter, thou who feedest all my thought,
Grant me but worthiness to worship thee!

DIONYSUS (*to* EURIPIDES).

Won't you put on some frankincense?

EURIPIDES (*staying where he is*).

Oh, thank you;
The gods I pray to are of other metal!

DIONYSUS.

Your own stamp, eh? New struck?

EURIPIDES.

Exactly so.

DIONYSUS.

Well, pray away then to your own peculiar.

EURIPIDES.

Ether, whereon I batten! Vocal chords!
Reason, and nostrils swift to scent and sneer,
Grant that I duly probe each word I hear.

CHORUS.

All of us to hear are yearning
Further from these twins of learning,
What dread road they walk, what burning
Heights they climb of speech and song.
Tongues alert for battle savage,
Tempers keen for war and ravage,
Angered hearts to both belong.
He will fight with passes witty
Smooth and smacking of the city,
Gleaming blades unflecked with rust;
He will seize—to end the matter—
Tree-trunks torn and clubbed, to batter
Brains to bits, and plunge and scatter
Whole arena-fulls of dust!

[DIONYSUS *is now seated on a throne as judge. The poets stand on either side before him.*

DIONYSUS.

Now, quick to work. Be sure you both do justice to your cases,
Clear sense, no loose analogies, and no long commonplaces.

EURIPIDES.

A little later I will treat my own artistic mettle,
This person's claims I should prefer immediately to settle.

I'll show you how he posed and prosed; with what audacious fooling
He tricked an audience fresh and green from Phrynichus's schooling.
Those sole veiled figures on the stage were first among his graces,
Achilles, say, or Niobe, who never showed their faces,
But stood like so much scene-painting, and never a grunt they uttered!

DIONYSUS.

Why, no, by Zeus, no more they did!

EURIPIDES.

And on the Chorus spluttered
Through long song-systems, four on end, the actors mute as fishes!

DIONYSUS.

I somehow loved that silence, though; and felt it met my wishes
As no one's talk does nowadays!

EURIPIDES.

You hadn't yet seen through it! That's all.

DIONYSUS.

I really think you're right! But still, what made him do it?

EURIPIDES.

The instinct of a charlatan, to keep the audience guessing
If Niobe ever meant to speak—the play meantime progressing!

DIONYSUS.

Of course it was! The sly old dog, to think of how
he tricked us!—
Don't (*to* AESCHYLUS) ramp and fume!

EURIPIDES (*excusing* AESCHYLUS).

We're apt to do so when the facts convict us!
—Then after this tomfoolery, the heroine, feeling
calmer,
Would utter some twelve wild-bull words, on mid-way
in the drama,
Long ones, with crests and beetling brows, and gor-
gons round the border,
That no man ever heard on earth.

AESCHYLUS.

The red plague . . . !

DIONYSUS.

Order, order!

EURIPIDES.

Intelligible—not one line!

DIONYSUS (*to* AESCHYLUS).

Please! Won't your teeth stop gnashing?

EURIPIDES.

All fosses and Scamander-beds, and bloody
targes flashing,
With gryphon-eagles bronze-embossed, and
crags, and riders reeling,
Which somehow never quite joined on.

DIONYSUS.

By Zeus, sir, quite my feeling!

A question comes in Night's long hours, that haunts me like a spectre,
What kind of fish or fowl you'd call a "russet hippalector."

AESCHYLUS (*breaking in*).

It was a ship's sign, idiot, such as every joiner fixes!

DIONYSUS.

Indeed! I thought perhaps it meant that music-man Eryxis!

[EURIPIDES.

You like then, in a tragic play, a cock? You think it mixes?]

AESCHYLUS (*to* EURIPIDES).

And what did you yourself produce, O fool with pride deluded?

EURIPIDES.

Not "hippalectors," thank the Lord, nor "tragelaphs," as you did—
The sort of ornament they use to fill a Persian curtain!
—I had the Drama straight from you, all bloated and uncertain,
Weighed down with rich and heavy words, puffed out past comprehension.
I took the case in hand; applied treatment for such distension—
Beetroot, light phrases, little walks, hot book-juice, and cold reasoning;
Then fed her up on solos. . . .

DIONYSUS (*aside*).

With Cephisophon for seasoning!

EURIPIDES.

I didn't rave at random, or plunge in and make confusions.
My first appearing character explained, with due allusions,
The whole play's pedigree.

DIONYSUS (*aside*).

Your own you left in wise obscurity!

EURIPIDES.

Then no one from the start with me could idle with security.
They had to work. The men, the slaves, the women, all made speeches,
The kings, the little girls, the hags . . .

AESCHYLUS.

Just see the things he teaches!
And shouldn't you be hanged for that?

EURIPIDES.

No, by the lord Apollo!
It's democratic!

DIONYSUS (*to* EURIPIDES).

That's no road for you, my friend, to follow;
You'll find the 'little walk' too steep; I recommend you quit it.

EURIPIDES.

Next, I taught all the town to talk with freedom.

AESCHYLUS.

I admit it.

'Twere better, ere you taught them, you had died
amid their curses!

EURIPIDES.

I gave them canons to apply and squares for marking
verses;
Taught them to see, think, understand, to scheme for
what they wanted,
To fall in love, think evil, question all things. . . .

AESCHYLUS.

Granted, granted!

EURIPIDES.

I put things on the stage that came from daily life and
business.
Where men could catch me if I tripped; could listen
without dizziness
To things they knew, and judge my art. I never
crashed and lightened
And bullied people's senses out; nor tried to keep
them frightened
With Magic Swans and Aethiop knights, loud barb
and clanging vizor!
Then look at my disciples, too, and mark what
creatures his are!
Phormisius is his product and the looby lump
Megainetus,
All trumpet, lance, moustache, and glare, who twist
their clubs of pine at us;
While Cleitophon is mine, sirs, and Theramenes the
Matchless!

DIONYSUS.

Theramenes! Ah, that's the man! All danger
leaves him scratchless.

His friends may come to grief, and he be found in awkward fixes,
But always tumbles right end up, not aces—no: all sixes!

EURIPIDES.

This was the kind of lore I brought
To school my town in ways of thought;
I mingled reasoning with my art
And shrewdness, till I fired their heart
To brood, to think things through and through;
And rule their houses better, too.

DIONYSUS.

Yes, by the powers, that's very true!
No burgher now, who comes indoors,
But straight looks round the house and roars:
"Where is the saucepan gone? And who
Has bitten that sprat's head away?
And, out, alas! The earthen pot
I bought last year, is not, is not!
Where are the leeks of yesterday?
And who has gnawed this olive, pray?"
Whereas, before they took his school,
Each sat at home, a simple, cool,
Religious, unsuspecting fool,
And happy in his sheep-like way!

CHORUS.

Great Achilles, gaze around thee!
'Twill astound thee and confound thee.
Answer now: but keep in bound the

Words that off the course would tear,
Bit in teeth, in turmoil flocking.
Yes: it's monstrous—shameful—shocking—
Brave old warrior. But beware!

Don't retort with haste or passion;
Meet the squalls in sailor fashion,
Mainsail reefed and mast nigh bare;
Then, when safe beyond disaster
You may press him fiercer, faster,
Close and show yourself his master,
Once the wind is smooth and fair!

DIONYSUS.

O thou who first of the Greeks did build great words to heaven-high towers,
And the essence of tragedy-padding distilled, give vent to thy pent-up showers.

AESCHYLUS.

I freely admit that I take it amiss, and I think my anger is just,
At having to answer a man like this. Still, lest I should seem nonplussed,
Pray, tell me on what particular ground a poet should claim admiration?

EURIPIDES.

If his art is true, and his counsel sound; and if he brings help to the nation,
By making men better in some respect.

AESCHYLUS.

And suppose you have done the reverse,
And have had upon good strong men the effect of making them weaker and worse,
What, do you say, should your recompense be?

DIONYSUS.

The gallows! You needn't ask him.

AESCHYLUS.

Well, think what they were when he had them from me! Good six-footers, solid of limb,
Well-born, well-bred, not ready to fly from obeying their country's call,
Nor in latter-day fashion to loiter and lie, and keep their consciences small;
Their life was in shafts of ash and of elm, in bright plumes fluttering wide,
In lance and greaves and corslet and helm, and hearts of seven-fold hide!

EURIPIDES (*aside*).

Oh, now he's begun and will probably run a whole armourer's shop on my head!
(*To* AESCHYLUS) Stop! How was it due in especial to you, if they were so very—well-bred?

DIONYSUS.

Come, answer him, Aeschylus! Don't be so hot, or smoulder in silent disdain.

AESCHYLUS (*crushingly*).

By a tragedy 'brimming with Ares!'

DIONYSUS.

A what?

AESCHYLUS.

The 'Seven against Thebes.'

DIONYSUS.

Pray explain.

AESCHYLUS.

There wasn't a man could see that play but he hungered for havoc and gore.

DIONYSUS.

I'm afraid that tells in the opposite way. For the Thebans profited more,
It urged them to fight without flinching or fear, and they did so; and long may you rue it!

AESCHYLUS.

The same thing was open to all of you here, but it didn't amuse you to do it!
Then next I taught you for glory to long, and against all odds stand fast;
That was "The Persians," which bodied in song the noblest deed of the past.

DIONYSUS.

Yes, yes! When Darius arose from the grave it gave me genuine joy,
And the Chorus stood with its arms a-wave, and observed, "Yow—oy, Yow—oy!"

AESCHYLUS.

Yes, that's the effect for a play to produce! For observe, from the world's first start

Those poets have all been of practical use who have been supreme in their art.
First, Orpheus withheld us from bloodshed impure, and vouchsafed us the great revelation ;
Musaeus was next, with wisdom to cure diseases and teach divination.
Then Hesiod showed us the season to plough, to sow, and to reap. And the laurels
That shine upon Homer's celestial brow are equally due to his morals !
He taught men to stand, to march, and to arm. . . .

DIONYSUS.

So that was old Homer's profession ?
Then I wish he could keep his successors from harm, like Pantacles in the procession,
Who first got his helmet well strapped on his head, and then tried to put in the plume !

AESCHYLUS.

There be many brave men that he fashioned and bred, like Lamachus, now in his tomb.
And in his great spirit my plays had a part, with their heroes many and brave—
Teucers, Patrocluses, lions at heart ; who made my citizens crave
To dash like them at the face of the foe, and leap at the call of a trumpet !—
But no Stheneboia I've given you, no ; no Phaedra, no heroine-strumpet !
If I've once put a woman in love in one act of one play, may my teaching be scouted !

EURIPIDES.

No, you hadn't exactly the style to attract Aphrodite!

AESCHYLUS.

I'm better without it.

A deal too much of that style she found in some of your friends and you,

And once, at the least, left you flat on the ground!

DIONYSUS.

By Zeus, that's perfectly true.

If he dealt his neighbours such rattling blows, we must think how he suffered in person.

EURIPIDES.

And what are the public defects you suppose my poor Stheneboia to worsen?

AESCHYLUS (*evading the question with a jest*).

She makes good women, and good men's wives, when their hearts are weary and want ease,

Drink jorums of hemlock and finish their lives, to gratify Bellerophontes!

EURIPIDES.

But did I invent the story I told of—Phaedra, say? Wasn't it history?

AESCHYLUS.

It was true, right enough; but the poet should hold such a truth enveloped in mystery,

And not represent it or make it a play. It's his duty to teach, and you know it.

As a child learns from all who may come in his way, so the grown world learns from the poet.

Oh, words of good counsel should flow from his voice—

EURIPIDES.

And words like Mount Lycabettus
Or Parnes, such as you give us for choice, must needs be good counsel?—Oh, let us,
Oh, let us at least use the language of men!

AESCHYLUS.

Flat cavil, sir! cavil absurd!
When the subject is great and the sentiment, then, of necessity, great grows the word;
When heroes give range to their hearts, is it strange if the speech of them over us towers?
Nay, the garb of them too must be gorgeous to view, and majestical, nothing like ours.
All this I saw, and established as law, till you came and spoilt it.

EURIPIDES.

How so?

AESCHYLUS.

You wrapped them in rags from old beggarmen's bags, to express their heroical woe,
And reduce the spectator to tears of compassion!

EURIPIDES.

Well, what was the harm if I did?

AESCHYLUS (*evading the question as before*).

Bah, your modern rich man has adopted the fashion, for remission of taxes to bid;
"He couldn't provide a trireme if he tried;" he implores us his state to behold.

DIONYSUS.

Though rags outside may very well hide good woollens beneath, if it's cold!
And when once he's exempted, he gaily departs and pops up at the Fishmongers' stalls.

AESCHYLUS (*continuing*).

Then, next, you have trained in the speechmaking arts nigh every infant that crawls.
Oh, this is the thing that such havoc has wrought in the wrestling-school, narrowed the hips
Of the poor pale chattering children, and taught the crews of the pick of the ships
To answer back pat to their officer's nose! How unlike my old sailor of yore,
With no thought in his head but to guzzle his brose and sing as he bent at the oar!

DIONYSUS.

And spit on the heads of the rowers below, and garott stray lubbers on shore!
But our new man just sails where it happens to blow, and argues, and rows no more!

AESCHYLUS.

What hasn't he done that is under the sun,
And the love-dealing dames that with him have begun?
One's her own brother's wife;
One says Life is not Life;
And one goes into shrines to give birth to a son!

Our city through him is filled to the brim
With monkeys who chatter to every one's whim;
Little scriveners' clerks
With their winks and their larks,
But for wrestle or race not a muscle in trim!

DIONYSUS.

Not a doubt of it! Why, I laughed fit to cry
At the Panathenaea, a man to espy,
Pale, flabby, and fat,
And bent double at that,
Puffing feebly behind, with a tear in his eye;

Till there in their place, with cord and with brace,
Were the Potters assembled to quicken his pace;
And down they came, whack!
On sides, belly, and back,
Till he blew out his torch and just fled from the race!

CHORUS.

Never were such warriors, never
Prize so rich and feud so keen:
Dangerous, too, such knots to sever:
He drives on with stern endeavour,
He falls back, but rallies ever,
Marks his spot and stabs it clean!

Change your step, though! Do not tarry;
Other ways there be to harry
Old antagonists in art.
Show whatever sparks you carry,
Question, answer, thrust and parry—
Be they new or ancient, marry,
Let them fly, well-winged and smart!

If you fear, from former cases,
That the audience p'raps may fail
To appreciate your paces
Your allusions and your graces,
Look a moment in their faces!
They will tell another tale.

Oft from long campaigns returning
Thro' the devious roads of learning
These have wandered, books in hand:
Nature gave them keen discerning
Eyes; and you have set them burning!
Sharpest thought or deepest yearning—
Speak, and these will understand.

EURIPIDES.

Quite so; I'll turn then to his Prologues straight,
And make in that first part of tragedy
My first review in detail of this Genius!
[His exposition always was obscure.]

DIONYSUS.

Which one will you examine!

EURIPIDES.

Which? Oh, lots!
First quote me that from the Oresteia, please.

DIONYSUS.

Ho, silence in the court! Speak, Aeschylus.

AESCHYLUS (*quoting the first lines of the Choephoroi*).

"Guide of the Dead, warding a father's way,
Be thou my light and saviour, where I pray,
In this my fatherland, returned, restored."

DIONYSUS (*to* EURIPIDES).

You find some false lines there?

EURIPIDES.

About a dozen!

DIONYSUS.

Why, altogether there are only three!

EURIPIDES.

But every one has twenty faults in drawing!
[AESCHYLUS *begins to interrupt.*

DIONYSUS.

No, stop, stop, Aeschylus; or perhaps you'll find
Your debts run up to more than three iambics.

AESCHYLUS (*raging*).

Stop to let *him* speak?

DIONYSUS.

Well, that's my advice.

EURIPIDES.

He's gone straight off some thousand miles astray.

AESCHYLUS.

Of course it's foolery—but what do *I* care?
Point out the faults.

EURIPIDES.

Repeat the lines again.

AESCHYLUS.

"Guide of the Dead, warding a father's way, . . ."

EURIPIDES.

Orestes speaks those words, I take it, standing
On his dead father's tomb?

AESCHYLUS.

I don't deny it.

EURIPIDES.

Then what's the father's way that Hermes wards?
Is it the way Orestes' father went,
To darkness by a woman's dark intent?

AESCHYLUS.

No, no! He calls on Eriounian Hermes,
Guide of the Dead, and adds a word to say
That office is derived from Hermes' father.

EURIPIDES.

That's worse than I supposed! For if your Hermes
Derives his care of dead men from his father, . . .

DIONYSUS (*interrupting*).

Why, resurrectioning's the family trade!

AESCHYLUS.

Dionysus, dull of fragrance is thy wine!

DIONYSUS.

Well, say the next; and (*to* EURIPIDES) you look out for slips.

AESCHYLUS.

"Be thou my light and saviour where I pray
In this my fatherland returned, restored."

EURIPIDES.

Our noble Aeschylus repeats himself.

DIONYSUS.

How so?

EURIPIDES.

Observe his phrasing, and you'll see.
First to this land "returned" and then "restored";
'Returned' is just the same thing as 'restored.'

DIONYSUS.

Why, yes! It's just as if you asked your neighbour,
'Lend me a pail, or, if not that, a bucket.'

AESCHYLUS.

Oh, too much talking has bemuzzed your brain!
The words are not the same; the line is perfect.

DIONYSUS.

Now, is it really? Tell me how you mean.

AESCHYLUS.

Returning home is the act of any person
Who has a home; he comes back, nothing more;
An exile both returns and is restored!

DIONYSUS.

True, by Apollo! (*To* EURIPIDES) What do you say
to that?

EURIPIDES.

I don't admit Orestes was restored.
He came in secret with no legal permit.

DIONYSUS.

By Hermes, yes! (*aside*) I wonder what they mean!

EURIPIDES.

Go on then to the next. [AESCHYLUS *is silent.*

DIONYSUS.

Come, Aeschylus,
Do as he says: (*to* EURIPIDES) and you look out for faults.

AESCHYLUS.

"Yea, on this bank of death, I call my lord
To hear and list. . . ."

EURIPIDES.

Another repetition!
"To hear and list"—the same thing palpably!

DIONYSUS.

The man was talking to the dead, you dog,
Who are always called three times—and then don't hear.

AESCHYLUS.

Come, how did *you* write prologues?

EURIPIDES.

Oh, I'll show you.
And if you find there any repetitions
Or any irrelevant padding,—spit upon me!

DIONYSUS.

Oh, do begin. I mustn't miss those prologues
In all their exquisite exactitude!

EURIPIDES.

"At first was Oedipus in happy state."

AESCHYLUS.

He wasn't! He was born and bred in misery.
Did not Apollo doom him still unborn
To slay his father? . . .

DIONYSUS (*aside*).

His poor unborn father?

AESCHYLUS.

"A happy state at first," you call it, do you?

EURIPIDES (*contemptuously resuming*).

"At first was Oedipus in happy state,
Then changed he, and became most desolate."

AESCHYLUS.

He didn't. He was never anything else!
Why, he was scarcely born when they exposed him
In winter, in a pot, that he might never
Grow up and be his father's murderer.
Then off he crawled to Polybus with sore feet,
Then married an old woman, twice his age,
Who further chanced to be his mother, then
Tore out his eyes: the lucky dog he was!

DIONYSUS.

At least he fought no sea-fight with a colleague
Called Erasinides!

EURIPIDES.

That's no criticism.
I write my prologues singularly well!

AESCHYLUS.

By Zeus, I won't go pecking word by word
At every phrase; I'll take one little oil-can,
God helping me, and send your prologues pop!

EURIPIDES.

My prologues pop . . . with oil-cans?

AESCHYLUS.

Just one oil-can!
You write them so that nothing comes amiss,
The bed-quilt, or the oil-can, or the clothes-bag,
All suit your tragic verse! Wait and I'll prove it.

EURIPIDES.

You'll prove it? Really?

AESCHYLUS.

Yes.

DIONYSUS.

Begin to quote.

EURIPIDES.

"Aegyptus, so the tale is spread afar,
With fifty youths fled in a sea-borne car,
But, reaching Argos . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

What's that about the oil-can! Drat the thing!
Quote him another prologue, and let's see.

EURIPIDES.

"Dionysus, who with wand and fawn-skin dight
On great Parnassus races in the light
Of lamps far-flashing, . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

Alas! again the oil-can finds our heart!

EURIPIDES (*beginning to reflect anxiously*).

Oh, it won't come to much, though! Here's another,
With not a crack to stick the oil-can in!
"No man hath bliss in full and flawless health;
Lo, this one hath high race, but little wealth;
That, base in blood, hath . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

Euripides!

EURIPIDES.

Well?

DIONYSUS.

Better furl your sails;
This oil-can seems inclined to raise the wind!

EURIPIDES.

Bah, I disdain to give a thought to it!
I'll dash it from his hands in half a minute.
[*He racks his memory.*

DIONYSUS.

Well, quote another;—and beware of oil-cans.

EURIPIDES.

"Great Cadmus long ago, Agenor's son,
From Sidon racing, . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

Oh, this is awful! Buy the thing outright,
Before it messes every blessed prologue!

EURIPIDES.

I buy him off?

DIONYSUS.

I strongly recommend it.

EURIPIDES.

No; I have many prologues yet to cite
Where he can't find a chink to pour his oil.
"As rapid wheels to Pisa bore him on,
Tantalian Pelops . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

What did I tell you? There it sticks again!
You might let Pelops have a new one, though—
You get quite good ones very cheap just now.

EURIPIDES.

By Zeus, not yet! I still have plenty left.
"From earth King Oineus, . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

EURIPIDES.

You *must* first let me quote one line entire!
"From earth King Oineus goodly harvest won,
But, while he worshipped, . . ."

AESCHYLUS.

Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS.

During the prayers! Who can have been the thief!

EURIPIDES (*desperately*).

Oh, let him be! I defy him answer this—
"Great Zeus in heaven, the word of truth has flown, . . ."

DIONYSUS.

O mercy! *His* is certain to be gone!
They bristle with long oil-cans, hedgehog-wise,
Your prologues; they're as bunged up as your eyes!
For God's sake change the subject.—Take his songs!

EURIPIDES.

Songs? Yes, I have materials to show
How bad his are, and always all alike.

CHORUS.

What in the world shall we look for next?
Aeschylus' music! I feel perplexed
How he can want it mended.
I have always held that never a man
Had written or sung since the world began
Melodies half so splendid!
(Can he really find a mistake
In the master of inspiration?
I feel some consternation
For our Bacchic prince's sake!)

EURIPIDES.

Wonderful songs they are! You'll see directly;
I'll run them all together into one.

DIONYSUS.

I'll take some pebbles, then, and count for you.

EURIPIDES (*singing*).

"O Phthian Achilles, canst hark to the battle's man-slaying shock,
Yea, shock, and not to succour come?
Lo, we of the Mere give worship to Hermes, the fount of our stock,
Yea, shock, and not to succour come!"

DIONYSUS.

Two shocks to you, Aeschylus, there!

EURIPIDES.

"Thou choice of Achaia, wide-ruling Atrides, give heed to my schooling!
Yea, shock, and not to succour come."

DIONYSUS.

A third shock that, I declare!

EURIPIDES.

"Ah, peace, and give ear! For the Bee-Maids be near to ope wide Artemis' portals.
Yea, shock-a-nock a-succour come!
Behold it is mine to sing of the sign of the way fate-laden to mortals;
Yah, shocker-knocker succucum!"

DIONYSUS.

O Zeus Almighty, what a chain of shocks!
I think I'll go away and take a bath;
The shocks are too much for my nerves and kidneys!

EURIPIDES.

Not till you've heard another little set
Compounded from his various cithara-songs.

DIONYSUS.

Well then, proceed; but don't put any shocks in!

EURIPIDES.

"How the might twin-throned of Achaia for Hellene chivalry bringeth
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
The prince of the powers of storm, the Sphinx thereover he wingeth
Flattothrat toflattothrat!

With deedful hand and lance the furious fowl of the air
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
That the wild wind-walking hounds unhindered tear
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
And War toward Aias leaned his weight,
Flattothrat toflattothrait!"

DIONYSUS.

What's Flattothrat? Was it from Marathon
You gathered this wool-gatherer's stuff, or where?

AESCHYLUS.

Clean was the place I found them, clean the place
I brought them, loath to glean with Phrynichus
The same enchanted meadow of the Muse.
But any place will do for *him* to poach,
Drink-ditties of Melêtus, Carian pipings,
And wakes, and dancing songs.—Here, let me show you!
Ho, some one bring my lyre! But no; what need
Of lyres for this stuff? Where's the wench that plays
The bones?—Approach, Euripidean Muse,
These songs are meet for your accompaniment!

DIONYSUS.

This Muse was once . . . no Lesbian; not at all!

AESCHYLUS (*singing*).

"Ye halcyons by the dancing sea
Who babble everlastingly,
While on your bathing pinions fall
The dewy foam-sprays, fresh and free;
And, oh, ye spiders deft to crawl
In many a chink of roof and wall,

While left and right, before, behind,
Your fingers wi-i-i-i-ind
The treasures of the labouring loom,
Fruit of the shuttle's minstrel mind,
Where many a songful dolphin trips
To lead the dark-blue-beakèd ships,
And tosses with aërial touch
Temples and race-courses and such.
O bright grape tendril's essence pure,
Wine to sweep care from human lips;
Grant me, O child, one arm-pressúre!"

[*Breaking off.*

That foot, you see?

DIONYSUS.

I do.

AESCHYLUS.

And he?

EURIPIDES.

Of course I see the foot!

AESCHYLUS.

And this is the stuff to trial you bring
And face my songs with the kind of thing
That a man might sing When he dances a fling
To mad Cyrênê's flute!

There, that's your choral stuff! But I've not finished,
I want to show the spirit of his solos!

[*Sings again ; mysteriously.*

"What vision of dreaming,
Thou fire-hearted Night,
Death's minion dark-gleaming,
Hast thou sent in thy might?
And his soul was no soul, and the Murk was his mother, a horror to sight!

Black dead was his robe, and his eyes
All blood, and the claws of him great;
Ye maidens, strike fire and arise;
Take pails to the well by the gate,
Yea, bring me a cruse of hot water, to wash off this vision of fate.

Thou Sprite of the Sea,
It is e'en as I feared!
Fellow-lodgers of me,
What dread thing hath appeared?
Lo, Glykê hath stolen my cock, and away from the neighbourhood cleared!

[*Wildly.*

(Ye Nymphs of the Mountain give aid!
And what's come to the scullery-maid?)

[*Tearfully.*

And I—ah, would I were dead!—
To my work had given my mind;
A spindle heavy with thread
My hands did wi-i-i-ind,
And I meant to go early to market, a suitable buyer to find!

[*Almost weeping.*

—But he rose, rose, in the air
On quivering blades of flight;
He left me care, care;
And tears, tears of despair,
Fell, fell, and dimmed my sight!

[*Recovering himself; in florid, tragic style.*

Children of Ida's snows,
Cretans, take up your bows,
And ring the house with many a leaping limb!
And thou, fair maid of bliss,
Dictynna, Artemis,
Range with thy bandogs through each corner dim;
Yea, Thou of twofold Fires,
Grant me my deep desires,
Thou Zeus-born Hecatê; in all men's eyes
Let the detective sheen
Flashed from thy torches keen,
Light me to Glykê's house, and that lost fowl surprise!"

DIONYSUS.

Come, stop the singing!

AESCHYLUS.

I've had quite enough!
What I want is to bring him to the balance;
The one sure test of what our art is worth!

DIONYSUS.

So that's my business next? Come forward, please;
I'll weigh out poetry like so much cheese!

A large pair of scales is brought forward, while the CHORUS *sing.*

CHORUS.

Oh, the workings of genius are keen and laborious!
Here's a new wonder, incredible, glorious!
Who but this twain Have the boldness of brain
To so quaint an invention to run?
Such a marvellous thing, if another had said it had
Happened to him, I should never have credited;
I should have just Thought that he must
Simply be talking for fun!

DIONYSUS.

Come, take your places by the balance.

AESCHYLUS *and* EURIPIDES.

There!

DIONYSUS.

Now, each take hold of it, and speak your verse,
And don't let go until I say "Cuckoo."

AESCHYLUS *and* EURIPIDES

(*taking their stand at either side of the balance*).

We have it.

DIONYSUS.

Now, each a verse into the scale!

EURIPIDES (*quoting the first verse of his "Medea"*).

"Would God no Argo e'er had winged the brine."

AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Philoctetes"*).

"Spercheios, and ye haunts of grazing kine!

DIONYSUS.

Cuckoo! Let go.—Ah, down comes Aeschylus
Far lower.

EURIPIDES.

Why, what can be the explanation?

DIONYSUS.

That river he put in, to wet his wares
The way wool-dealers do, and make them heavier!
Besides, you know, the verse you gave had wings!

AESCHYLUS.

Well, let him speak another and we'll see.

DIONYSUS.

Take hold again then.

AESCHYLUS *and* EURIPIDES.

There you are.

DIONYSUS.

Now speak

EURIPIDES (*quoting his "Antigone"*).

"Persuasion, save in speech, no temple hath."

AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Niobe"*).

"Lo, one god craves no offering, even Death."

DIONYSUS.

Let go, let go!

EURIPIDES.

Why, his goes down again!

DIONYSUS.

He put in Death, a monstrous heavy thing!

EURIPIDES.

But my Persuasion made a lovely line!

DIONYSUS.

Persuasion has no bulk and not much weight.
Do look about you for some ponderous line
To force the scale down, something large and strong.

EURIPIDES.

Where have I such a thing, now? Where?

DIONYSUS

(*mischievously, quoting some unknown play of* EURIPIDES).

I'll tell you;
"Achilles has two aces and a four!"—
(*Aloud*) Come, speak your lines; this is the final bout.

EURIPIDES (*quoting his "Meleager"*).

"A mace of weighted iron his right hand sped."

AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Glaucus"*).

"Chariot on chariot lay, dead piled on dead.

DIONYSUS (*as the scale turns*).

He beats you this time too!

EURIPIDES.

How does he do it?

DIONYSUS.

Two chariots and two corpses in the scale—
Why, ten Egyptians couldn't lift so much!

AESCHYLUS (*breaking out*).

Come, no more line-for-lines! Let him jump in
And sit in the scale himself, with all his books,
His wife, his children, his Cephisophon!
I'll back two lines of mine against the lot!

The central door opens and PLUTO *with his suite comes forth.*

A VOICE.

Room for the King!

PLUTO (*to* DIONYSUS).

Well, is the strife decided?

DIONYSUS (*to* PLUTO).

I won't decide! The men are both my friends;
Why should I make an enemy of either?
The one's so good, and I so love the other!

PLUTO.

In that case you must give up all you came for!

DIONYSUS.

And if I do decide?

PLUTO.

Why, not to make
Your trouble fruitless, you may take away
Whichever you decide for.

DIONYSUS.

Hearty thanks!
Now, both, approach, and I'll explain.—I came
Down here to fetch a poet: "Why a poet?"
That his advice may guide the City true

And so keep up my worship! Consequently,
I'll take whichever seems the best adviser.
Advise me first of Alcibiades,
Whose birth gives travail still to mother Athens.

PLUTO.

What is her disposition towards him?

DIONYSUS.

Well,
She loves and hates, and longs still to possess.
I want the views of both upon that question!

EURIPIDES.

Out on the burgher, who to serve his state
Is slow, but swift to do her deadly hate,
With much wit for himself, and none for her.

DIONYSUS.

Good, by Poseidon, that!—And what say you?
[*To* AESCHYLUS.

AESCHYLUS.

No lion's whelp within thy precincts raise;
But, if it *be* there, bend thee to its ways!

DIONYSUS.

By Zeus the Saviour, still I can't decide!
The one so fine, and the other so convincing!
Well, I must ask you both for one more judgment;
What steps do you advise to save our country?

EURIPIDES.

I know and am prepared to say!

DIONYSUS.

Say on.

EURIPIDES.

Where Mistrust now has sway, put Trust to dwell,
And where Trust is, Mistrust; and all is well.

DIONYSUS.

I don't quite follow. Please say that again,
Not quite so cleverly and rather plainer.

EURIPIDES.

If we count all the men whom now we trust,
Suspect; and call on those whom now we spurn
To serve us, we may find deliverance yet.

DIONYSUS.

And what say you?

AESCHYLUS.

First tell me about the City;
What servants does she choose? The good?

DIONYSUS.

Great Heavens,
She loathes them!

AESCHYLUS.

And takes pleasure in the vile?

DIONYSUS.

Not she, but has perforce to let them serve her!

AESCHYLUS.

What hope of comfort is there for a City
That quarrels with her silk and hates her hodden?

DIONYSUS.

That's just what *you* must answer, if you want
To rise again!

AESCHYLUS.

I'll answer there, not here.

DIONYSUS.

No; better send up blessing from below.

AESCHYLUS.

Her safety is to count her enemy's land
Her own, yea, and her own her enemy's;
Her ships her treasures, and her treasure dross!

DIONYSUS.

Good;—though it all goes down the juror's throat!

PLUTO (*interrupting*).

Come, give your judgment!

DIONYSUS.

Well, I'll judge like this;
My choice shall fall on him my soul desires!

EURIPIDES.

Remember all the gods by whom you swore
To take me home with you, and choose your friend!

DIONYSUS.

My tongue hath sworn;—but I'll choose Aeschylus!

EURIPIDES.

What have you done, you traitor?

DIONYSUS.

I? I've judged
That Aeschylus gets the prize. Why shouldn't I?

EURIPIDES.

Canst meet mine eyes, fresh from thy deed of shame?

DIONYSUS.

What is shame, that the . . . Theatre deems no shame?

EURIPIDES.

Hard heart! You mean to leave your old friend dead?

DIONYSUS.

Who knoweth if to live is but to die? . . .
If breath is bread and sleep a woolly lie?

PLUTO.

Come in, then, both.

DIONYSUS.

Again?

PLUTO.

To feast with me
Before you sail.

DIONYSUS.

With pleasure! That's the way
Duly to crown a well-contented day!

CHORUS.

O blessed are they who possess
An extra share of brains!
'Tis a fact that more or less
All fortunes of men express;
As now, by showing
An intellect glowing,

This man his home regains;
Brings benefit far and near
To all who may hold him dear,
And staunches his country's tear,—
All because of his brains!

Then never with Socrates
Make one of the row of fools
Who gabble away at ease,
Letting art and music freeze,
And freely neglect
In every respect
The drama's principal rules!
Oh, to sit in a gloomy herd
A-scraping of word on word,
All idle and all absurd,—
That is the fate of fools!

PLUTO.

Then farewell, Aeschylus! Go your ways,
And save your town for happier days
By counsel wise; and a school prepare
For all the fools—there are plenty there!
And take me some parcels, I pray; this sword
Is for Cleophon; these pretty ropes for the Board
Of Providers. But ask them one halter to spare
For Nicomachus; one, too, is Myrmex's share.
And, along with this venomous
Draught for Archenomus,
Take them my confident prayer,

That they all will come here for a visit, and stay.
And bid them be quick; for, should they delay,
Or meet my request with ingratitude, say
I will fetch them myself, by Apollo!
And hurry the gang of them down with a run
All branded and chained—with Leucolophus' son
The sublime Adimantus to follow!

Aeschylus.

I will do as you wish.—And as for my throne,
I beg you let Sophocles sit there alone,
On guard, till perchance I return some day;
For he—all present may mark what I say—
Is my Second in art and in wit.
And see, above all, that this Devil-may-care
Child of deceit with his mountebank air
Shall never on that imperial chair
By the wildest of accidents sit!

Pluto.

With holy torches in high display
Light ye the Marchers' triumphal advance;
Let Aeschylus' music on Aeschylus' way
Echo in song and in dance!

Chorus.

Peace go with him and joy in his journeying! Guide ye our poet
Forth to the light, ye Powers that reign in the Earth and below it;
Send good thoughts with him, too, for the aid of a travailing nation,
So shall we rest at the last, and forget our long desolation,

War and the clashing of wrong.—And for Cleophon, why, if he'd rather,
Let him fight all alone with his friends, in the far-off fields of his father.

[*They all go off in a procession, escorting* AESCHYLUS.

COMMENTARY ON THE FROGS

P. 179, l. 1, Xanthias.]—A common slave's name from Xanthus, the chief town of Lycia, or possibly from ξανθός, "auburn," "red-headed." Northern slaves were common.

P. 180, ll. 14, 16, Phrynichus, Ameipsias, Lykis.]—Contemporary comic poets. Phrynichus was competing with his "Muses" against Aristophanes on the present occasion, and won the second prize. Ameipsias' *Connos* won the first prize over the *Clouds*, and his *Revellers* over the *Birds*.

P. 182, l. 33, Why wasn't I on board at Arginusae?]—All slaves who fought in that battle had been set free. It and its consequences loom so large in *The Frogs* that it is desirable to give some account of them. It was a great victory. Seventy Spartan ships were destroyed and the admiral, Callicratidas, slain. But it was not properly followed up, and it was dearly bought by the loss of twenty-five triremes, with nearly the whole of their crews, amounting to about five thousand men. It was believed that with more care many of these men might have been saved, and most of the dead bodies collected for burial. The generals were summoned home for trial for this negligence. They pleaded bad weather, and also that they had given orders to the trierarchs (or captains) to see to recovering the men overboard. The trierarchs were thus

forced in self-defence to throw over the generals, and it happened that they had among them the famous orator and "Moderate" politician, Theramenes. He, naturally, led the case for his fellow-trierarchs, and succeeded in showing that the order to see to the shipwrecked men was sent out much too late, after the storm had arisen. A coincidence intensified the general emotion. The Feast of the Apaturia, devoted to family observances and the ties of kindred, chanced to occur at the time of the trial. Whole kindreds were seen in mourning. (It was rumoured afterwards that impostors were hired by the enemies of the generals to go about in black, wailing for imaginary relatives—like Sebînus below (p. 212)—"floating unburied on the waves!") The generals were condemned, and six of them, including Erasînides (p. 264), executed. Theramenes "came off scatchless" (p. 248), except in reputation.

P. 183, l. 48, Cleisthenes.]—Noted for his effeminate good looks. He may or may not have been in command of a ship.

P. 183, l. 53, The *Andromeda*.]—See Appendix. Molon was a very tall actor who performed in it.

P. 185, l. 64, Seest then the sudden truth.]—From Euripides' *Hypsipylê*. Acted 411–409. See Appendix.

P. 185, l. 72, For most be dead, &c.]—From Euripides' *Oineus*. See Appendix.

P. 185, l. 73, Iophon.]—Son of Sophocles. Fifty plays are attributed to him by Suidas, among others a *Bacchae* or *Pentheus*, from which we have the fragment: "This I understand, woman though I be; that the more man seeketh to know the Gods' mysteries, the more shall he miss knowledge." He won the

second prize in 428, when the *Hippolytus* obtained the first.

P. 186, l. 83, Agathon.]—The much-praised tragic poet, for whose first victory in B.C. 416 the "Symposium" of Plato's dialogue professes to be held. He left Athens "*to feast with peaceful Kings*," *i.e.* with Archelaus of Macedon, in B.C. 407, at the age of forty, immediately after Aristophanes' attack on him in the *Gerytades*, and before his influence had established itself on Athenian tragedy. He is a butt in the *Thesmophoriazusae* also.

P. 186, l. 86, Xenocles.]—Son of Carcinus. No critic has a good word for him, though he won the first prize in 415 over Euripides' *Troades*. He is nicknamed "The Dwarf," "Datis the Mede," and "Pack-o'-tricks" (δωδεκαμήχανος). One line of his seems to be preserved, from the *Licymnius*—

"*O bitter fate, O fortune edged with gold.*"

P. 186, l. 87, Pythangelus.]—Nothing whatever is known of this man except the shrug of Dionysus' shoulders. And that has carried his name to 2500 years of "immortality"!

P. 187, l. 89, Other pretty fellows.]—Among them would be Plato. Other celebrated men of this time who in their youth tried writing tragedies were Antiphon, Melêtus the accuser of Socrates, Critias the Oligarch, and Theognis his colleague, Dionysius the tyrant of Syracuse; later, Crates the philosopher, and perhaps the great Diogenes.

P. 187, l. 100, O holy Ether.]—"I swear by the holy Ether, home of God," from Euripides' *Melanippe the Wise*. See Appendix.

P. 187, l. 100, Foot of Time.]—The phrase occurs

very boldly in *Bacchae*, 888 (translated "stride"), but that play was not yet published. Euripides had said, "On stepped the foot of Time," in the *Alexandros*, acted B.C. 415.

P. 187, l. 101, Souls that won't take oaths, while tongues, &c.]—See *Hippolytus*, 612 (p. 33). The frequent misrepresentations of this line are very glaring, even for Aristophanes. Cf. *Frogs*, 1471, *Thesm.* 275; also Plato, *Theaet.* 154d, and *Symp.* 199a, who, however, refers to the phrase sympathetically.

P. 187, l. 105, Ride not upon my soul.]—The source of this quotation is not known.

P. 189, l. 124, The hemlock way.]—The ordinary form of capital punishment at Athens was poisoning with hemlock. Socrates in the *Phaedo* describes the gradual *chilling* of his body after drinking it.

P. 189, l. 129, Cerameicus.]—The Potter's Quarter of Athens. The "great tower" is probably that built by Timon the Misanthrope in this quarter. It would command a view, for instance, of the torch races at the feasts of Prometheus and Hephaestus, and at the Panathenaea, which ran "from the Academy to the City through the Kerameicus" (Pausanias, I. xxx. 2, with Frazer's note).

P. 190, l. 139, For two obols.]—Two obols constituted the price of a day's work as legally recognised by the early Athenian democracy. It was the payment made for attendance at the Jury Courts, and distributed to poor citizens to enable them to attend festivals. Hence it was also the price of entry to the theatre. It was probably also the original payment for attendance at the Ecclesia, or serving in garrison, or on ship-board, in cases where payment was not

made in rations. The payments were greatly altered and increased (owing to the rise in prices) during the war and the fourth century.

Charon traditionally took one obol, the copper coin which was put in the dead man's mouth. But Theseus, the fountain-head of the Athenian constitution, has introduced the Two-obol System in Hades!

P. 191, l. 151, Morsimus.]—Son of Philocles and grand-nephew of Aeschylus, was a doctor as well as a tragic poet. No one has a good word for his poetry, and no fragments—except one conjectural half line—exist.

P. 191, l. 153, Kinesias.]—A dithyrambic poet of the new and florid school of music, from whom Aristophanes can never long keep his hands. He had frail health and thin legs; and you could not "tell right from left" in his music. The parodies of his style in the *Birds* are rather charming. Plato denounces him and his music in the *Gorgias* (501e). But it is interesting to observe that he was the author of a law reducing the extravagance and sumptuousness of choric performances — which does not look like "corrupt" art.

P. 192, l. 158, The Initiated.]—Persons initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries, as in those of Orpheus and others, had their sins washed away, saw a great light not vouchsafed to other eyes, and had eternal bliss after death.

P. 192, l. 159, The donkey, holiday-making.]—Much as a costermonger's donkey with us celebrates its master's Bank Holiday by extra labour.

P. 194, ll. 186 f., Lethe and Sparta and the rest of

Hell.]—I suspect that in *Λήθης πεδίον, ὄνου ποκὰς, Ταίναρον*, we have a reference to a proposal, by some member of the war party, to take the offensive against Sparta by sailing round the Laconian coast—as Tolmides had done—and landing at *Λεύκης πεδίον, ὄνου γνάθος* (Strabo, 8, 363), and *Ταίναρον*.

P. 195, l. 191, The battle of the Cold Meat Unpreserved.]—Arginusae, see above, p. 285. Ophthalmia seems to have been a common cause of disablement or malingering in Greek soldiers. See Hdt. vii. 229.

P. 202, l. 282, What is so flown with pride]—"as man's weak heart?" So says Odysseus of himself in the opening of Euripides' *Philoctetes*. See Appendix.

P. 203, l. 293, Empusa.]—A vague phantom appearing in dark places, whose chief characteristic was to be constantly changing, so that whenever you looked it seemed different. Like other phantoms, she was sent by Hecate. Aeschines' mother was so nicknamed (Dem. xviii. 130) as being (1) changeable, always devoted to some new religion; (2) associated with uncanny mysteries.

P. 204, l. 303, Hegelochus.]—An actor who performed the hero's part in Euripides' *Orestes*, B.C. 408. He ought to have said, "I catch a tale of peace." He seems to have pronounced *γαλήν' ὁρῶ*, in *Orestes*, v. 279, so that it sounded like *γαλῆν ὁρῶ*, "I see a weasel." We hear much of this slip. See Sannyrion, fr. 8, and Strattis, fr. 1 and 60.

P. 205, l. 311, Parlour of God.]—See on p. 187, l. 100.

P. 206, l. 320, Diagoras.]—Diagoras of Melos, nicknamed "the atheist," who was condemned to death for his attack on the Mysteries, but happily escaped to Pellene and the Peloponnese.

P. 207, l. 338, Roasting pig.]—Pigs were sacrificed before the Mysteries. Cf. *Peace*, 374—

"Lend me three drachmas for a sucking pig!
I must be purified before I die."

P. 208, l. 353, The Mere.]—*Λίμναι*, the district between the three hills—Acropolis, Areopagus, and Pnyx—where the 'Lenaion,' or 'Wine-Press,' and the shrine and precinct of Dionysus have been recently discovered.

P. 208, ll. 354 ff.—The Hierophant's address is apparently a parody of some similar warning off of the impure at the Mysteries before the addresses to Korê (the Maiden), Demêter, and Iacchus. As to the allusions: Cratînus is the celebrated comic poet, precursor and rival of Aristophanes. He was personally a burly and vigorous "Beef-eater," and the word is additionally suitable in this context because the ceremonial eating of an ox's flesh, being sacramentally the flesh of Dionysus, the Mystic Bull of Zeus, was an essential part of the Orphic Mysteries. There were contests with bulls at the Eleusinian also.—Lobeck. Agl. p. 206, note c.

P. 208, l. 363.—Thorycion is unknown except for the allusions in this play.

P. 209, l. 366, A teacher of Choirs.]—He alludes to a ribald anecdote about the poet Kinesias (p. 289).

P. 209, l. 367, Pitiful fines.]—Many laws were passed restricting the licence and the expensiveness of comedy, *e.g.* by Archînos, Agyrrhius, and Archedêmus.

P. 214, l. 464, Aeacus.]—This character and his speech seem to be parodied from the *Peirithous*, a tragedy attributed either to Euripides or to Critias

(acted after 411), where the real Heracles is confronted and threatened by the real Aeacus. "Gorgons" and "lampreys" are suitable in the infernal regions; but "lampreys of Tartessus" in Spain were a well-known delicacy, and the "Gorgons" of the Attic district Tithras were apparently something human and feminine—like the Hostess who appears presently.

P. 216, l. 501, Melitêan.]—The quarter of Athens called Melitê possessed a temple of Heracles, and perhaps a rough population.

P. 216, l. 505, Split-pea porridge, &c.]—Heracles, nearly always a comic figure on the Athenian stage (perhaps, as Professor Ridgeway suggests, because he was a "Pelasgian" hero), has gross and simple tastes in his food. Xanthias, I think, refuses out of caution, feeling that Persephone will detect his imposture, and then is overcome by temptation.

P. 218, l. 531, Alcmena's son, &c.]—A tragic line, but of origin unknown.

P. 218, l. 541, Theramenes.]—This interesting man owes his bad name in *The Frogs* to his conduct with regard to the impeachment of the generals after Arginusae (see pp. 248, 286). But he had made a similar impression, and earned his nickname of "The Buskin"—which goes equally well on either foot—in 411, when he first was a leader in the Oligarchic Revolution, and then turned against it, and even spoke in accusation of his late associates, Antiphon and Archeptolemus, when they were being condemned to death. It would have been the same story in the second Oligarchic Revolution of 404, had not the extreme Oligarchs saved themselves by murdering him. A "Moderate" at a time when faction was

furiously high, he is continually found supporting various movements until they "go too far." Aristotle (*Const. of Athens*, cap. 28) counts him with Nicias and Thucydides, son of Melesias, as one of the "three best statesmen in Athenian history," and has an interesting defence of his character. He was certainly a man of great culture, eloquence, ability, and personal influence. And his policy has a way of seeming exactly right. Yet he is unpleasantly stained with the blood of his companions, and one is not surprised to find the tone of Aristophanes towards him peculiarly soft and venomous, unlike his ordinary loud railing.

P. 221, ll. 569, 570, Cleon . . . Hyperbolus.]—It is interesting to observe the duties—even in caricature—of a προστάτης τοῦ δήμου, or Champion of the Demos. He fought the causes of the oppressed.

P. 222, l. 588, Archedêmus.]—See above, p. 211.

P. 223, l. 608, Ditylas, Skeblyas, Pardokas.]—The barbarous names seem to be Thracian or Scythian. Police work in Athens was done by Scythian slaves.

P. 224, l. 616, Question this poor boy.]—A man's slaves would generally know about his movements. Hence it was a mark of conscious innocence for an accused person to offer his slaves to be examined. They were examined under torture, or threats of torture, in order that they might fear the law as much as they feared their master, and were guaranteed protection against his anger if they told the truth. The master usually stipulated that no severe or permanently injurious torture should be used. Xanthias generously offers to let them maltreat Dionysus as much as ever they like!

P. 224, l. 621, No scourges made of leeks or young shalott.]—Why should any one imagine scourges made of such things? Because such things were used for certain ceremonial scourgings; for instance, Pan's statues were whipped with squills (Theoc. vii. 106), the scapegoats (*pharmakoi*) in Ionia with fig-twigs and squills (Hippônax, fr. 4–8), the disgraceful boor in Lucian (*Against the Boor*, 3; cf. *Fugit*, 33, and *Vera Hist.*, ii. 26) with mallow.

P. 225, l. 628, An illegal act, being immortal.]—A parody of the law. It was illegal to torture a citizen.

P. 225, l. 634, He won't feel it.]—There appears to be some inconsistency about this very funny scene. Dionysus does seem to feel it as much as Xanthias.

P. 227, l. 651, Diomêan Feast.]—Held in honour of Heracles (whom Xanthias is personating) at the deme Diomeia every four years.

P. 228, l. 661, Hippônax.]—An earlier writer of satire. The next quotation is said to be from the *Laocoon* of Sophocles.

P. 229, l. 679, Cleophon.]—The well-known bellicose and incorruptible demagogue, who opposed peace in 410 (after the victory of Cyzicus), in 406 (after the victory of Arginusae), and in 405 (after the disaster of Aegospotami). Cleophon is said to have come drunk into the Agora and vowed that "he would cut off the head of any one who mentioned the word 'peace.'" He was shortly afterwards either assassinated or judicially murdered by the Moderates and Oligarchs. The point of these intentionally obscure and nonsensical lines seems to be: (1) that Cleophon talked bad Attic,

like a barbarian, and was in fact of Thracian birth; (2) that he went about whining—and well he might! —that his political enemies meant to twist the law somehow so as to have him condemned to death. An equally divided vote counted by rights as an acquittal. See also the last two lines of this play.

P. 230, l. 688, All Athenians shall be equal, &c.]—That is, an amnesty should be granted to those implicated in the Oligarchical Revolution led by Phrynichus in 411.

P. 230, l. 694, Become Plataeans.]—When Plataea was destroyed by Sparta in 431, the refugees were granted rights of Athenian citizenship and eventually given land (421) in the territory of Skiône in Chalcidice. The slaves who were enfranchised after Arginusae were apparently sent to join the Plataeans.

P. 232, ll. 718–720, Is the same towards men and money.]—Mr. George Macdonald has convinced me that such is the meaning of this passage. Gold coins were struck at this period (B.C. 407; Scholiast quoting Hellanicus and Philochorus), and were, to judge from those specimens now extant, *of exceptional purity*. Bronze coins also were struck (Schol. on v. 725) in the year 406–5, and apparently found unsatisfactory, as they were demonetised by the date of the Ecclesiazusae, B.C. 392 (Eccl. 816 ff.). See Köhler in *Zeitsch. für Numismatik*, xxi. pp. 11 ff. Others take the general sense to be:—

"It has often struck our notice that this city draws the same
Line between her sons true-hearted and the men who cause her shame,

As between our ancient silver and the stuff we now
call gold.
Those old coins knew naught of alloys ; everywhere
their fame was told.
Not all Hellas held their equal, not all Barbary far
and near,
Every tetradrachm well minted, tested each and
ringing clear."

This would be very satisfactory if there was any reason to suppose either that (1) there was an issue of *base* gold at this time, or (2) the new bronze coinage was jestingly called "the new gold."

P. 232, l. 730, Red-haired things.]—Northerners, especially from the Athenian colonies on the coast of Thrace. Asiatic aliens are comparatively seldom mentioned in Attic writers.

P. 232, l. 733, Scapegoats.]—*φαρμακοί*, like "Guy Fawkeses." Traditions and traditional ceremonies survived in various parts of Greece, pointing to the previous existence of an ancient and barbarous rite of using human "scapegoats," made to bear the sins of the people and then cast out or killed. See the fragments of Hippônax, 4–8. It is stated by late writers that in Athens two criminals, already condemned to death and 'full of sin,' were kept each year to be used in this way at the Feast of Thargelia. The sins of the city were ritually laid upon them ; they were, in ceremonial pretence, scourged before execution ; their bodies were burnt by the sea-shore and their ashes scattered. The evidence is given in Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 366, 4. It is preposterous, to my thinking, to regard this as a "human sacrifice"—a

thing uniformly referred to with horror in Greek literature.

P. 234, l. 756, Zeus of the Friendly Jailbirds.]—A deity invented to meet the occasion of their swearing friendship.

P. 237, l. 791, Clidemides informs us.]—The joke is now unintelligible. Even the Alexandrian scholars did not know who Clidemides was. He may, for instance, have been some fussy person who toadied Sophocles and liked to give news about him.

P. 237, ll. 799 ff., Straight-edges and cubit-rules, &c.]—The art of scientific criticism, as inaugurated by Gorgias, Prodicus, Thrasymachus, and afterwards developed by Isocrates and Aristotle, would seem absurd to Aristophanes; the beginnings of physics and astronomy and grammar are similarly—and less excusably—satirised in the *Clouds*.

P. 238, ll. 814–829.—The parody of Aeschylus is not so brilliant as that upon Euripides, whom Aristophanes knew to the tips of his fingers (pp. 270 *seqq.*). The "Thunderer" and "Thoughtbuilder" is Aeschylus; the "Man of the Mouth," Euripides.

P. 240, l. 837, Bard of the noble savage.]—Aeschylus drew largely from the more primitive and wild strata of Greek legend, as in the *Prometheus* and *Suppliants*. The titles and fragments of the lost plays show the same tendency even more strongly.

P. 240, l. 840, How sayst thou, Son of the Goddess of the Greens.]—A parody of a line of Euripides (possibly from the *Telephus*), where "Sea" stood in place of "Greens." Euripides' mother, Cleito, was of noble family (*τῶν σφόδρα εὐγενῶν*) and owned land. For some unknown reason it was a well-established

joke to call her a "Greengroceress." (Cf. Ach. 457, 478; Knights, 18 ff.; Thesm. 387, 456, 910, and the "beetroot and book juice," below, p. 246.) Possibly the poet was at some time of his life a vegetarian.

P. 240, l. 842, Blind-beggar-bard; crutch-and-cripple playwright.]—Euripides seems to have used more or less realistic costumes. With him the shipwrecked Menelaus looked shipwrecked, the lame Telephus lame; Electra, complaining of the squalor of her peasant life, was dressed like a peasant-woman. It is curious how much anger this breach in the tradition seems to have created. We are told that Aeschylus dressed all his characters in gorgeous sacerdotal robes. Yet I wonder if we moderns would have felt any very great difference between his Philoctetes or Telephus (in both of which cases the lameness is essential) and that of Euripides.

P. 240, l. 844, Strike not thine heart, &c.]—A tragic line, the source not known.

P. 240, l. 847, A black lamb.]—As sacrificed to appease Typhon, the infernal storm-god.

P. 240, l. 849, Cretan dancing-solos.]—Possibly a reference to his Cretan tragedies (*The Cretans*, *The Cretan Women*); perhaps merely a style of dancing accompanied by song.

P. 241, l. 855, Knock out all the Telephus.]—(Cf. "That'll knock the Sordello out of him"), *i.e.* his brains, which consist of *Telephus* in masses. No play of Euripides is so often mocked at.

P. 242, l. 877, Founts of Quotation.]—Literally "makers of Gnômae" or quotable apophthegms.

P. 244, l. 910, Phrynichus.]—The tragic poet, predecessor of Aeschylus, not the oligarchical conspirator.

P. 244, l. 911, Sole veiled figures.]—In the extant plays the silent Prometheus and the silent Cassandra are wonderfully impressive. Achilles (in the *Phrygians*) and Niobe (in the *Niobe*) seem to have been 'discovered' sitting silent at the opening of the play. The Adrastus of Euripides' *Suppliants* (v. 104 ff.) is exactly similar; the silences of Heracles (*Her.* v. 1214) and Hecuba (*Hec.* v. 485), in the plays that bear their names, are different.

P. 246, l. 931, A question comes in night's long hours.]—From *Hippolytus*, v. 375. A hippalector (horse-cock, a kind of flying horse with a bird's tail, see p. 284), was mentioned in the *Myrmidons* of Aeschylus; both the adjective (translated "russet," but perhaps meaning "shrill") and the noun were obscure, and the phrase is often joked upon; *e.g.* *Birds*, 805, of the basket-seller Dieitrephes, who, from being nobody

"Rose on wicker wings to captain, colonel, cavalry inspector,
Till he holds the world in tow and ranks as russet hippalector,"

—where "scarlet" or "screaming" would suit better.

P. 246, l. 934, Eryxis.]—Unknown. The next line is considered spurious by some critics, as being inconsistent with Euripides' general argument.

P. 246, l. 937.—A "tragelaph," "goat-stag," was a name for the figures of antelopes, with large saw-like horns, found on Oriental tapestry.

P. 246, l. 941, Treatment for such distension . . . fed it up on solos.]—This account is generally true. Euripides, as an artist, first rationalised and clarified

his medium, and then re-enriched it. He first reduced the choric element and made the individual line much lighter and less rich. Then he developed the play of incident, the lyrical 'solo singing,' and the background of philosophic meditation.

P. 246, l. 944, Cephisophon.]—A friend of Euripides (not a slave, as his name shows), known chiefly from a fragment of Aristophanes—

> "Most excellent and black Cephisophon,
> You lived in general with Euripides,
> And *helped him in his poetry*, they say."

A late story, improbable for chronological reasons, makes him a lover of the poet's wife.

P. 247, l. 952, That's no road, &c.]—Euripides in later life severely attacked the democratic party. *E.g.* *Orestes*, 902–930. See introduction to *The Bacchae*.

P. 248, l. 963, Magic Swans.]—It is not known in what play Aeschylus introduced the swan-hero Cycnus. Memnon, the 'Aethiop knight,' occurred in two plays, the *Memnon* and the *Soul-weighing*.

P. 248, l. 964.—The difference between the pupils of Aeschylus and Euripides is interesting. Aeschylus turned out stout, warlike, old-fashioned Democrats; Euripides, "*intellectuels*" of Moderate or slightly oligarchical politics.

P. 248, l. 965, Phormisius.]—One of the Democratic stalwarts who returned with Thrasybulus. He proposed the amnesty of 403, recalling the exiles. He was afterwards ambassador to Persia. He is described as bearded, shaggy, and of truculent aspect, and died (according to gossip) in a drinking bout. A sort of *Μαραθωνομάχης* person, loyal and unsubtle.

P. 248, l. 965.—Megainetus is not elsewhere mentioned, and the meaning of the word *μανῆς*, "looby lump," is obscure. It seems to be a slave's name, and also the name of a bad throw at dice.

P. 248, l. 967, Cleitophon.]—One of the coadjutors of Theramenes in the Oligarchical Revolution of 411 (*Ar. Rep. Ath.* 29, 3). He also gives his name to a fragmentary Platonic dialogue, where he argues that Socrates is of inestimable value in rousing the conscience of the quite unconverted man, but worse than useless to the converted man who seeks positive guidance. Cleitophon is there connected with Lysias and Thrasymachus, both of them Democrats. His political attitude would therefore seem to be like that of Theramenes. This party may be taken to represent the general views of Euripides, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Aristotle, and indeed, apart from certain personal prejudices and a dislike to intellectualism, of Aristophanes himself. In general, as Mr. Neil says in his introduction to the *Knights*, "Attic literature is on the side of the Moderates, in favour somewhat vaguely of a restricted franchise and clearly of a Panhellenic peace" (involving a more liberal treatment of the Allies). The closer Platonic circle was in a different position. Many of its members were compromised by the bitterer Oligarchic Revolution of 404, and separated from Moderates as well as Democrats by a river of blood.

P. 248, l. 967.—For Theramenes, see above, p. 292.

P. 249, l. 970, Not aces—no; all sixes.]—*E.g.* it looked as if Theramenes was fatally compromised by the non-recovery of the bodies at Arginusae; instead of which he contrived to make himself leader of the

agitation on that very subject. (The reading, however, is doubtful.)

P. 249, l. 992, Great Achilles gaze around thee]—"on the spear-tortured labours of the Achaeans, while thou within thy tent . . ."—From the *Myrmidons* of Aeschylus.

P. 252, l. 1026.—The *Persae* was, as a matter of fact, performed in 472, before the *Seven against Thebes* (467); nor does the exact exclamation "Yow-oy," *ἰαυοῖ*, occur in it. But various odd quasi-Persian forms do: *οἲ, ὀᾶ, ἰωά.*

P. 253, l. 1031, Those poets have all been of practical use, &c.]—This passage, dull and unintelligent as it seems (unless some jest in it escapes me), is not meant to be absurd. It implies an argument of this sort: "All poetry, to be good, must *do* something good;" a true statement as it stands. "Homer and the ancients do good to people." No one would dare to deny this, and no doubt it is true; he does them good by helping them to see the greatness and interestingness of things, by filling their minds with beauty, and so on; but the ordinary man, having a narrower idea of good, imagines that Homer must do him "good" in one of the recognised edifying or dogmatic ways, and is driven to concluding that Homer does him good by his military descriptions and exhortations!

Aeschylus proceeds, "I am like Homer because I describe battles and brave deeds, and similar things that are good for people. Euripides is unlike Homer, because he describes all sorts of other things, which are not in Homer, and are therefore probably trash; at any rate some of them are improper!"

This is ordinary philistinism. Aeschylus struck Aristophanes as being like Homer, not because they were both warlike, but chiefly because they were both great well-recognised poets of the past, whom he had accepted in his childhood without criticism. He attacks Euripides for making him think and feel in some new or disturbing way, or perhaps at a time of life when he does not expect really to think and feel at all. Probably the contemporaries of Aeschylus attacked him in just the same way. He made people think of the horrors of victory and of vengeance; he made a most profound and un-Homeric study of the guilty Clytaemnestra. But Aristophanes, when in his present mood, resembles that modern critic who is said to have praised Shakespeare for writing "bright, healthy plays with no psychology in them."

P. 253, l. 1036, Pantacles.]—A lyric poet, one of whose victories is recorded on an extant inscribed pillar (Dittenberger, 410). The "procession" was doubtless at the Panathenaea six months before.

P. 253, l. 1039, Lamachus.]—The general who died so heroically in the Sicilian expedition. He is attacked in the Acharnians as representative of the war party, partly perhaps because of his name ("Love-battle" or "Host-fighter"). He is treated respectfully in Thesm. 841.

P. 253, l. 1043, Stheneboia.]—See Appendix. Phaedra, heroine of the *Hippolytus*.

P. 253, l. 1044, A woman in love in one act of one play.]—An exaggeration. Clytaemnestra is in love with Aegisthus, as any subtle reading of the *Agamemnon* shows; but other passions are more prominent,

and love in Aeschylus is on the whole treated with reserve and stiffness. There was, however, a famous speech of Aphrodite in the *Danaïdes*, explaining herself as a world-force. And Euripides would probably have shrunk from writing such lines as *Myrmidons*, fr. 135, 136, and from representing Semelê's pregnancy as Aeschylus seems to have done in the play called by her name (see *Nauck*), a great deal more than Aeschylus would have shrunk from the delicate psychology of Euripides' *Phaedra*. In the dramatic treatment of female character Aeschylus was really the pioneer who opened the road for Euripides. The Clytaemnestra of the *Agamemnon* probably differs from the women of earlier poets in just the same way as Phaedra differs from her, and to a far greater degree.

P. 254, l. 1046, Once . . . left you flat on the ground.]—The allusion is entirely obscure.

P. 254, l. 1051, To gratify Bellerophontes.]—That hero, in a fury, had wished that all women might poison themselves.

P. 255, l. 1058, The language of men.]—Euripides, as represented, agrees with Wordsworth. The general voice of poetry is clearly against both.

P. 256, l. 1074, And spit on the heads, &c.]—One of the passages which show that Aristophanes could see the other side when he chose. Your stout, ignorant pre-sophistic farmer or sailor was a bit of a brute after all!

P. 256, l. 1080, Goes into shrines.]—Augê. See Appendix for all three.

P. 256, l. 1081, Her own brother's wife.]—Canacê in the *Aeolus*.

P. 256, l. 1082, Life is not Life.]—See below, p. 343, from the *Polyîdus*. The same sentiment occurs in the *Phrixus*.

P. 258, l. 1109, If you fear from former cases, &c.]—The meaning may also be that they have a book in their hands at the time, viz. a copy of the play. So Van Leeuwen: "These verses were added in the second performance of *The Frogs*. At the first performance . . . this part of the play had been over the heads of some, perhaps many, of the audience. But now, says the Chorus, this objection is removed; copies of the play are in every citizen's hand."

P. 258, l. 1124, Oresteia.]—The prologue quoted is that of the *Choephori*; *Oresteia* ("The Orestes-poetry"), seems to have been another name for that play. We apply the word to the whole trilogy—*Agamemnon*, *Choephori*, *Eumenides*. The growth of formal titles for books was a very slow thing. Probably Aeschylus scarcely "named" his plays much more definitely than Herodotus and Thucydides "named" their histories. Even Euripides' plays sometimes bear in the MSS. varying names: *Bacchae* or *Pentheus*, *Hippolytus* or *Phaedra*. By the time of Plato regular names for plays must have been established, as he named his dialogues in evident analogy from plays.

P. 259, l. 1126, Warding a father's way.]—A phrase really obscure. Commentators differ about the interpretation.

P. 260, l. 1150, Dionysus, dull of fragrance, &c.]—Apparently a tragic line.

P. 263, l. 1182, At first was Oedipus, &c.]—Prologue to Euripides' *Antigone*.

P. 264, l. 1196, Erasinides.]—One of the commanders at Arginusae. There was one piece of bad luck that Oedipus missed.

P. 264, l. 1200, One oil-can.] An ancient Athenian carried a cruse of olive oil about with him, both to anoint himself with after washing and to eat like butter with his food. Naturally he was apt to lose it, especially when travelling. In my first edition I could find no object which both ancient Greeks and modern Englishmen would habitually use and lose except an umbrella. But since then motors have come in.

The point of this famous bit of fooling is, I think, first, that Euripides' tragic style is so little elevated that oil-cans and clothes-bags are quite at home in it; secondly, that there is a certain monotony of grammatical structure in Euripides' prologues, so that you can constantly finish a sentence by a half-line with a verb in it.

The first point, though burlesquely exaggerated, is true and important. Euripides' style, indeed, is not prosaic. It is strange that competent students of Greek tragic diction should ever have thought it so. But it is wide in its range, and uses colloquial words by the side of very romantic or archaic ones—a dangerous and difficult process, which only a great master of language can successfully carry through. Cf. the 'light weight' of his lines, below, pp. 273 ff.

As to the second point, it is amusing to make out the statistics. Of the extant Greek tragedies, the following can have *ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσε* stuck on to one of the first ten lines of the prologue: Aesch. *Prom.* 8, *Sept.* 6, *Eum.* 3 (a good one, *ἦ δὴ τὸ μητρὸς*

ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν), and several other lines; Soph. *O. T.* 4, *El.* 5, *Trach.* 3 and 6, *Antig.* 2 and 7 (ἆρ' οἶσθ' ὅτι Ζεὺς λ. ἀ.); Euripides, *Tro.* 10, *Hec.* 2, *Phoen.* 7, *Hclid*, 2 and 4, *Her.* 9, *Hel.* 4, *El.* 10, *I. A.* 54 (=6), and *I. T.* 2, quoted here. Thus all three tragedians have such passages in the opening of about half their extant plays, and the "monotony," if such it be, belongs rather to the style of the tragic prologue than to Euripides.

A third allusion seems to have been felt by the ancient writers on rhetoric. *Λήκυθος* and ληκύθιον (Synesius p. 55), in the sense of "paint-flask" (Latin *ampulla*), were cant terms for "ornament in diction." Euripides' tragic heroes, with their plain style of speech, seem to have lost their paints. I do not think Aristophanes meant this.

P. 264, l. 1206, Aegyptus, &c.]—The first words, it is said, of the *Archelaus*, though Aristarchus, the famous Alexandrian scholar, says that the *Archelaus* as published in his time had a different prologue without these words. Apparently there were two alternative prologues; cf. the *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

P. 265, l. 1211, Dionysus, &c.]—Opening of the *Hypsipylê*. It went on: "amid the Delphian maids."

P. 265, l. 1217, No man hath bliss, &c.]—Opening of the *Stheneboea*. It went on: "Rich acres holds to plough."

P. 266, l. 1225, Cadmus long since]—"his way to Thêbê won." Opening of the *Phrixus*.

P. 266, l. 1232, Pelops the Great]—"a royal bride had won." Opening of the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, still extant.

P. 267, l. 1238, Oineus from earth.]—From the

Meleager, but not (according to the Scholiast) the first words. It went on: "Left one due deed undone, Praising not Artemis."

P. 267, l. 1244, Great Zeus in heaven, &c.]—Opening of *Melanippe the Wise*. It went on: "Was sire to Hellen," and therefore did not really admit the ληκύθιον tag.

P. 267, l. 1247, As bunged up as your eyes.]—There are various allusions to Euripides' bodily infirmities in his extreme old age.

Pp. 268 ff., ll. 1264 ff.—Aristophanes parodying Aeschylus is not nearly as brilliant and funny as when parodying Euripides. The lines here are all actual lines of Aeschylus: a refrain is made of a line which is good sense when first used, but easily relapses into gibberish. The plays quoted are, in order, the *Myrmidons*, *Raisers of the Dead*, *Telephus* (?), *Priestesses*, *Agamemnon* (v. 104); then, for the cithara songs, *Agamemnon* (v. 109), *Sphinx*, *Agamemnon* (v. 111), *Sphinx* (?), *Thracian Women*.

P. 270, l. 1294, War towards Aias.]—Obscure and perhaps corrupt.

P. 270, l. 1296, Was it from Marathon, &c.]—"Did you find that sort of stuff growing in the marsh of Marathon when you fought there?" Aeschylus answers: "Never you mind where I got it. It was from a decent place!" The metre of the song, and presumably the music, is Stesichorean.

P. 270, l. 1308, No Lesbian.]—*I.e.* she is very unlike the simple old Lesbian music of Sappho and Alcaeus; but there is a further allusion to the supposed improprieties of Lesbian women.

P. 270, l. 1309, Ye halcyons, &c.]—This brilliant

parody contains a few actual Euripidean phrases; cf. *I. T.* 1089—

> "O bird, that wheeling o'er the main
> By crested rock and crested sea
> Cryest for ever piteously,
> O Halcyon, I can read thy pain," &c.

and *El.* 435 *seqq.*, "Where the tuneful dolphin winds his way before the dark-blue-beaked ships." "The shuttle's minstrel mind" is said by the Scholiast to be from the *Meleager*.

P. 271, l. 1314, Wi-i-i-ind.]—A musical "shake." This particular word εἰλίσσω is scanned εἰ-ειλίσσω (and actually so written in one MS.) in *El.* 437, the passage cited above; and a papyrus fragment of the *Orestes* has ὡς written ὡως with two musical notes above it. Of course the thing is common in lyric poetry, both Greek and English, but decidedly rarer in Aeschylus than in Euripides.

P. 271, l. 1323, That foot.]—The metrical foot, περίβαλλ', an anapaest rather irregularly used: I imitate the effect in "arm-pressúre."

P. 271, l. 1328, Cyrene.]—Not much is known of her, and that not creditable.

P. 272, l. 1331, Thou fire-hearted Night, &c.]—Cf. the solo of Hecuba (*Hec.* 68 *seqq.*). The oxymoron ("his soul no soul") and the repetitions are very characteristic of Euripides, though common enough in Aeschylus (*e.g.* Aesch. *Suppliants*, 836 ff., where there are seven such repetitions). It is not Euripides, but Greek tragedy in general, that is hit by this criticism.

P. 273, l. 1356, Cretans take up your bows, &c.]—

From Euripides' *Cretans*, according to the Scholiast, but he does not specify the lines.

P. 273, l. 1365, Bring him to the balance : the one sure test.]—This is indeed the one test—and a fairly important one—in which Euripides must be utterly beaten by Aeschylus. Every test hitherto has been inconclusive.

P. 277, after l. 1410, Room for the King, &c.]—I have inserted this line. There seems to be a gap of several lines in our MSS.

P. 277, l. 1413, The one's so good,] = viz. Euripides, and "I so love" Aeschylus.—Euripides was σοφὸς, being master of the learning, including conscious poetical theory, which had not fully entered into the ideals of the educated Athenian in Aeschylus' time.

P. 278, l. 1422, Alcibiades.]—He was now in his second exile. Appointed one of the three generals of the Sicilian expedition in 415, he was called back from his command to be tried for "impiety" (in connection with the mutilation of the Hermae). He fled and was banished ; then he acted with Sparta against Athens in order to procure his recall. Upon the outbreak of the Oligarchic Revolution of 411, the fleet, which remained democratic, recalled Alcibiades. He commanded with success for three years, returned to Athens in triumph in 408, and was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief. The defeat at Notium in 406, for which his carelessness was considered responsible, caused him to be superseded, and he retired to the castles which were his private possessions in the Chersonese, maintaining an ambiguous political attitude, but on the whole friendly to Athens. He was mysteriously assassinated in 404. The divergent

advice of the two poets is clear and probably characteristic. Euripides says, "Have no dealings with such a shifty and traitorous person;" Aeschylus says, "Make all the use you can, even with some risk, of every good fighter." And this would, no doubt, be Aristophanes' view, to judge from the Parabasis of this play (pp. 230–232).

P. 278, l. 1425, She loves and hates, &c.]—Said to be parodied from a line in *The Sentinels* (*φρουροί*) by Ion of Chios.

P. 278, l. 1434, The one so wise, &c.]—I do not think that any real distinction is drawn between *σοφῶς*, "wisely," and *σαφῶς*, "truly" or "convincingly."

P. 279, l. 1443, Where Mistrust is, &c.]—The respective lines of advice are the same as before. Euripides says, "Purge your governing bodies and keep the *morale* of the state sound"; Aeschylus says, "Fight your hardest and think of nothing but fighting."

P. 280, l. 1468, My choice shall fall, &c.]—Seems to be a tragic line.

P. 280, l. 1471, My tongue hath sworn.]—*Hippolytus*, v. 612 (see above, p. 288).

P. 281, l. 1474, Canst meet mine eyes, &c.]—From Euripides' *Aeolus* (see Appendix).

P. 281, l. 1477, Who knoweth if to live, &c.]—From the *Polyîdus* (cf. above, p. 256).

P. 282, l. 1482, Then never with Socrates, &c.]—A most interesting attack on the Socratic circle for lack of brains—of all charges! Plato, Critias, and "other pretty fellows" (see p. 287) wrote tragedies, and no doubt seemed to old stagers like Aristophanes to break "the drama's principal rules."

P. 282, ll. 1504 ff., This sword is for Cleophon.]—Viz. to kill himself with (see on Cleophon above, p. 294). The "Board of Providers" was specially appointed to raise revenue by extraordinary means after the Sicilian disasters. Myrmex and Archenomus are otherwise unknown. Nicomachus was a legal official against whom Lysias wrote his speech, No. XXX. Adeimantus is a better known figure. A disciple of Protagoras, he was a general in 407 and in actual command at the defeat at Notium. He was appointed general again after the condemnation of those concerned in the battle of Arginusae; continued in his command next year, and was responsible, through incompetence or deliberate treachery, for the annihilation of the Athenian fleet by Lysander at Aegospotami (404).

P. 283, l. 1528, Peace go with him, &c.]—The dactylic hexameter metre is rather characteristic of Aeschylus, and so is the solemnity of these last lines—so charmingly broken by the jest at the very end.

P. 284, l. 1533, Fields of his father.]—The leader of the extreme 'patriotic' party was supposed to be a foreigner—of Thracian descent.

EROS WITH A LYRE

APPENDIX ON THE LOST PLAYS

AEOLUS

ACTED before 421 B.C. The plot is based on Homer's description (*Odyssey*, x., beginning) of the 'floating isle, where lived Aeolus, son of Hippotas, the Wind-King, with his six sons and six daughters, shut off from the world by a brazen wall, for ever feasting amid the wailing of his winds. And the six daughters he gave to his six sons to wife.'

In a Homeric fairy-tale, the last statement produces no moral shock. And in some early Greek societies, as later among the Ptolemies, the marriage of brother and sister was lawful; while, on the other hand, the marriage of first cousins was in some societies forbidden. Classical Athenian feeling agreed with our own on the subject.

In Euripides' tragedy, the eldest son, Macareus, loved his sister Canacê. Aeolus discovered what he regarded as his daughter's guilt, and sent her by a slave a naked sword, with no message. Macareus, hearing of the discovery, threw himself at his father's feet. The old King broke out upon him :—

AEOLUS.

Canst meet mine eyes, fresh from thy deed of shame?

MACAREUS.

What *is* shame, if a man's heart feels no shame?

Macareus prays for his sister's life and for mercy. Love is above custom, and his father's moral indignation has its base in custom. The old King argues and is beaten; his rage flickers out; he feels his weakness:—

> "God help us all;
> 'Tis an old gibe, and bitter true withal—
> We old men are as nothing, every one;
> A little noise, a shape against the Sun,
> Something that gropes and wanders like a dream.
> And seeing our wits are very slow, we deem
> Slowness is wisdom!"

He relents. Macareus hastens to Canacê's chamber, to tell her that her life is spared. He finds her lying in her blood, takes the same sword and dies with her. Some words remain of the speech of the messenger who tells of their deaths:—

> "This Cyprian,
> She is a thousand thousand changing things;
> She brings more pain than any god; she brings
> More joy. I cannot judge her. May it be
> An hour of mercy when she looks on me!"

The play is naturally a frequent theme of attack. See *Clouds*, 1371; also p. 256, l. 1080.

ALEXANDROS.

Acted B.C. 414, with the *Troades*.

Hecuba, Queen of Troy, dreamed that she gave birth to a burning brand. So when her child was born, it was exposed by the priests' orders on Mount Ida, after being named Alexandros. The boy was rescued and bred up by shepherds, who named him Paris. Priam and Hecuba, however, believe him

dead, and are haunted by remorse. Some one remonstrates with Hecuba on her folly :—

"To lie
In new-shed tears for sorrow long gone by."

At last they determine to hold a funeral feast in honour of the lost son. It will also serve to display the prowess of their other sons. Amid other preparations, Priam sends his servants to buy a certain splendid bull that has been seen on Mount Ida guarded by a young unknown herdsman. The herdsman, who is, of course, Alexandros, follows them, and so comes to contend at his own funeral games. Many strangers also contend.

A messenger tells the result to Priam. The foreign competitors have been duly defeated. So far it is well for Troy :—

"But for thee, O wearer of the crown,
The arm that should have conquered is struck down,
And that which skilled not conquers! The prize falls
Not to thy children, Priam, but thy thralls."

The young herdsman, who is a slave, like all other herdsmen, has vanquished every one. They taunt him. The Prince Deiphobus calls to the other sons of Priam not to tolerate the slave's insolence, and draws sword upon him. The herdsman breaks out :—

"O cowards and caitiffs, oh, not slaves in name,
But lives bred deep in slavery and shame. . . ."

He flies to the altar-hearth of Priam's palace, where he is somehow recognised by his sister, the prophetess Cassandra.

The fragments are full of discussions of slavery and its injustices.

ANDROMEDA.

Acted B.C. 412, seven years before *The Frogs*. This play was very celebrated, and is remarkable as being almost the only simple and unclouded love story that Euripides ever wrote. Kepheus, King of Ethiopia, having in some way offended the gods, his daughter Andromeda was, by their command, exposed in chains upon a cliff to be devoured by a sea-monster. Perseus, returning from the slaying of the Gorgon Medusa, passed near and saw what he took to be a statue carved in the rock :—

"What cliff is yonder, islanded above
Wild foaming seas? And on the face thereof,
Is it the image of a virgin, white
And marble, for some cunning hand's delight
Hewn in the living rock?"

He approaches and speaks to her :—

PERSEUS.

O Chained Maiden, my heart bleeds for thee!

ANDROMEDA.

Who speaks? Who art thou, that canst pity me?

He learns her doom and offers to fight the sea-monster :—

"O virgin, if I save thee, wilt thou keep
Remembrance of me?"

ANDROMEDA.

Wouldst thou make me weep
With dreams of hope that never can be won?

PERSEUS.

Deeds that men dreamed not of, have yet been done!

It is perhaps in this context that the beautiful lines occur :—

"Methinks it is the morrow, day by day,
That cows us, and the Coming Thing alway
Greater than things to-day or yesterday."

He slays the monster, and in discharge of his promise prepares to restore Andromeda to her parents. But she does not care to return ; she loves him :—

"Take me, O Stranger, for thine handmaiden
Or wife or slave ! "

It is not clear who speaks the lines :—

"We cast us on this torrent, love, to meet
Another soul beneath the torrent's feet ;
And if that soul be good, oh, life is sweet ! "

There is some parleying with Kepheus, who seems to be a covetous and crafty old king ; but love wins the day, and Perseus carries off Andromeda to be his queen in Argos.

The play opened, it would seem, without a prologue, showing the heroine chained to the cliff, and watching for the first glimmer of dawn with the words, "O holy Night, how long is the wheeling of thy chariot ! " There are fragments of a long lyrical scene between Andromeda and some Maidens, broken into by the babbling of Echo—the Echo of the cliffs and caves—which are full of romantic beauty :—

"Oh, by the coolness of the caverned stone,
By all its gentleness,
Thou Echo, Echo, mocking my distress,
Peace ! Let me weep alone,
Alone with them that love me, till all my tears be run."

The long celebrity of the play is shown by a pleasant story of Lucian's about the tragedy-fever that once fell upon the people of Abdêra, so that they went about declaiming iambics "and especially sang the solos from the *Andromeda*, and went through the great speech of Perseus, one after another, till the city was full of seven-day-old tragedians, pale and haggard, crying aloud :—

'Erôs, high monarch over gods and men,
Oh, lest thy lovers perish, turn again
Beauty to be not Beauty any more ;
Or give us joyous strength to stand before
Her face, and climb the grievous paths, O thou
Who madest them, wherein we falter now !'"

ANTIGONE.

The date is uncertain. The plot is said to have been much the same as in Sophocles' great tragedy : viz. Creon, ruler of Thebes, has ordered that the dead body of Polyneices, the unjustly exiled prince, who has returned to fight against his country, shall be cast out to dogs and not buried ; Polyneices' sister Antigone defies the law, and with her own hands buries the body, and is doomed to death. Creon's son, Haemon, slays himself for love of her. But in Euripides, we are told, "being discovered burying her brother's body with Haemon, she is given to him in marriage and bears a child, Maeon" (Soph. *Ant. Argument*, cf. Schol. *ib.* 1350). Dionysus seems to have appeared at the end, from which Hartung concludes that probably Antigone appealed to Haemon to help her in burying the body of Polyneices ; both were

discovered ; then either both were condemned to death, or perhaps she only was condemned, but Haemon determined to die with her, when Dionysus appeared, rebuked Creon, and commanded that the two lovers should be pardoned and united in marriage.

There is another story in Hyginus, possibly derived from Euripides, in which it is Haemon's duty to watch the body and put to death any person found trying to bury it. Antigone is brought to him for execution. He hides her away on Mount Kithaeron and secretly marries her, while pretending that she is dead. Eventually their son comes to Thebes, and is recognised by Creon through the mark on his body which shows that he is of the Dragon's Seed. But the play from which this story is taken must, of course, take place when the son of Haemon and Antigone is a grown youth. And one of our fragments seems clearly to refer to the body of Polyneices as recently slain :—

"Death is the end and bar of human hate.
'Tis plain to every eye. What man shall sate
His wrath with torment of the grey hill stone,
Stabbing until it smart? Or win one groan
From the dead flesh that knows not scorn nor wrong?"

ARCHELAUS.

This play, not produced during the poet's lifetime, was probably written in his last years. It celebrates the legendary ancestor of his host, Archelaus of Macedon.

Archelaus, a descendant of Heracles, and son of

Têmenus, King of Argos, being driven into exile by his brothers, comes into Macedonia, beggared, wandering as a goat-herd. Kisseus, the King of Macedonia, is being hard pressed in war by his barbarian neighbours; "the plain is a-gleam with their fires." The goat-herd seems to have met with some adventure and distinguished himself. Kisseus offers him a place in his army. The goat-herd offers to take command of it and to defeat the foe, if the King will promise him his daughter in marriage, and with her the reversion of the kingdom! The King protests. Archelaus reveals who he is; tells of his birth and nurture, and how his father Têmenus had trained him to follow in the paths of Heracles. Either Archelaus, or possibly some third person, espousing his cause, urges that a Heraclid prince even in poverty is worthy of the King's daughter:—

> "In a child's eye the goodness of the good
> Shines; and it is a prize, that hardihood,
> More precious in a bridegroom than much gold,
> The poor man's jewel, never lost nor sold,
> His father's gentleness!"

The goat-herd is young, poor, strong-witted—the three together should make the King reflect. Wealth is often a positive hindrance:—

> "Sweetness of days and rest and dallying
> Have never lifted any fallen thing,
> City nor house."

The King at last agreed, but when Archelaus had, by miracles of valour or divine protection, destroyed his enemies, was unwilling to fulfil his promise. Some counsellor or other advised him to assassinate the

stranger; his daughter pleaded the other way in vain. A plot was made to lead the young chief over a pit full of burning coals, lightly covered, into which he should fall. A slave of the King's (or of the Princess's?) warned Archelaus. He sent word instantly asking the King to meet him alone for an important purpose. The King came. Archelaus reproached him with his treachery, and threw him into his own pit. Amid the tumult that followed, Heracles appeared and commanded Archelaus to fly with a goat for his guide and build a town called after the goat's name (Aegae), of which he should be king. Presumably he wedded the princess.

AUGE.

Acted after B.C. 415. Auge, daughter of Aleus, king of some town in Arcadia, was a priestess of Athena. During a midnight dance in honour of the Goddess, Heracles, passing that way on his wanderings, saw Auge, not knowing who she was, ravished or beguiled her, and went his ways, leaving her his ring as a token. The priestess went back to her temple, and eventually bore a child, which she kept concealed in the sacred places. A plague fell upon the land, and was judged by the prophets to be due to a defilement of Athena's house. The King, Aleus, forced his way—against the priestess's protest—into the temple, found the babe and learned all the story. He had the babe thrown out to wild beasts on the mountains of Arcadia, and ordered Auge to be cast into the sea, or down a precipice. At this moment Heracles, returning from his quest (the Stymphalian Birds, or

the Augean Stables?), passed by again, asked for hospitality from Aleus, and recognised the ring on the finger of the doomed princess. He rescued Auge, made amends by sacrifice to Athena, and, searching the mountains, found the child alive and being suckled by a wild deer, from which miraculous fortune he gave it the name Telephus (as though θηλέλαφος). The fragments suggest that Auge requited with real love what was only a passing and ignoble fancy in Heracles. She seems to have no feeling of guilt, nor any hatred against her seducer. Her rebellious outburst against her own Virgin Goddess was celebrated :—

> "Arms black with rotted blood,
> Are sweet to thee, and dead men's wreckage good
> To deck thy temples! Only Auge's babe
> Frights thee with shame!"

And love seems to have been in question somewhere :—

> "For whoso deems him not a God, this Love,
> Yea, an enthronèd Power all gods above,
> 'Tis a wry soul; or, having never sought
> Nor felt things beautiful, he knoweth not
> The Spirit that moveth mightiest over men."

THE CRETANS.

The date of this play is uncertain and the story far from clear. It dealt with the love of Pasiphaë for "The Bull," and the Chorus was composed of Cretan Mystae, or ascetic saints, devoted to the worship of Idaean Zeus and Zagreus.

The Bull was originally a God, probably (to judge from the excavations) the chief Cretan God; Pasiphaë

seems to have been a Moon Goddess, but may quite possibly be the Queen of the land mystically wedded to the Bull God. The presence of a Chorus of Mystae makes it conceivable that Euripides treated his monstrous story from this point of view—as a solemn religious mystery. Ordinary writers on mythology make the Bull a miraculous sea monster sent by the wrath of Poseidon. Many authors, however, such as Plutarch and Palaephatus, rationalise the story, and make Taurus (Bull) the name of a soldier or pirate. Johannes Malalas makes him a notary! We cite in full his severely rationalised version (iv. p. 105).

"At which times lived Daedalus and Icarus, who were celebrated because of Pasiphaë, wife of Minos the King, and Taurus, her notary, by whose seduction she bore a son, him called Minotaurus, Daedalus and Icarus having helped her intrigue. So Minos the King imprisoned her in a chamber"—this represents the labyrinth—"with two bondmaids, and gave her food, never seeing her more; and she, from affliction at being deposed from her royal honour, was smitten with disease and died. And Daedalus and Icarus were slain. Icarus while flying from his prison fell into the sea from his ship"—not from his melting wings!—"while Daedalus was executed. Euripides the poet put out a play about Pasiphaë." It is a question whether Euripides kept the miraculous and monstrous elements of the story or no. See Verrall in *Classical Review*, 1902.

It seems to me that Phaedra in the *Hippolytus*, when she mentions her mother's love story, is evidently referring to a human passion, Taurus being a soldier

or pirate. But in *The Cretans* I think it probable that Euripides plunged wholesale, and perhaps with hostile intentions, into a "religious mystery" of a barbaric and monstrous kind. Plutarch evidently thought of Taurus as a Bull.

The first words of the Chorus of Mystae are preserved; addressing Minos, they are full of "mystic" allusions, most of which will be fairly clear to those who have read *The Bacchae* :—

"Child of Europa's Tyrian line,
Zeus-born, who holdest at thy feet
The hundred citadels of Crete,
I seek to thee from that dim shrine,

Roofed with the Quick and Carven Beam,
By Chalyb steel and wild bull's blood
In flawless joints of cypress wood
Made steadfast. There in one pure stream

My days have run, the servant I,
Enhallowed, of Idaean Jove:
Where midnight Zagreus roves, I rove;
I have endured his thunder-cry;

Fulfilled his red and bleeding feasts;
Held the Great Mother's mountain flame;
I am Set Free, and named by name
A Bacchos of the Mailèd Priests.

Robed in pure white, I have borne me clean
From man's vile birth and coffined clay,
And exiled from my lips alway
Touch of all meat where life hath been."

HYPSIPYLE.

Acted between 411 and 409 B.C. In the first scene a nurse is seen with a child in a meadow before a great cave. She plays with it, and sings with the accompaniment of the child's rattle. She describes how the baby has been playing in the meadow :—

> "Up by the caverned bower,
> Plundering, ravishing, flower on flower,
> This and the next one—all are good—
> On with the joyous heart, the wild
> Infinite want, of babyhood.
>
> O cast thine arms about me, Child!"

This nurse is really Hypsipyle, Princess of Lemnos, who had saved her father many years before in the general massacre of the men in that island, and sent him secretly away in a boat together with her two infant sons. For this she has been sold into slavery, and after passing from city to city, has become a bondmaid to Eurydice, Queen of Nemea, whose baby she is now guarding. There arrives presently a king with some soldiers, who beg to be shown the way to a spring of water. It is Adrastus of Argos, leading his army against Thebes, and his people are dying of drought. Hypsipyle leaves the child to show them the way to the only spring that has not been dried up ; and when she returns the baby is dead, killed by a serpent! Adrastus kills the serpent, and goes with the slave to tell the tidings to the Queen Eurydice. Eurydice, wild with grief, is going to put the nurse to death. Adrastus intercedes for her ; the Queen should not be

judge in her own cause. And beyond that, she should be patient :—

"And hearken, Queen. I have one counsel still.
There lives no man on earth but hath much ill
In living. Aye, we see our children die,
And beget others, and forget, and lie
Ourselves in the earth. And then must men complain,
Seeing the dust draws back to dust again!
For so 'tis written ; like the grassy leas
In the mowing, Life is mown ; and this man is,
And that man is not. Step by step to rue
These paths that all things born must travel through,
What doth it profit any soul? And that
Which must be, who may chide or rage thereat?"

(Adrastus in tragedy is always a type of somewhat proverbial eloquence, a superior Polonius.) The Queen consents to abide by the decision of an impartial stranger. There are two youths from Lemnos who chance to be staying as guests of her husband at the palace ; let them be judges. The two youths hear the cause, and decide that the slave is guilty, and may, if her mistress so wills, be put to death, when, by some chance word, they discover that she is Hypsipyle. They are themselves the two sons whom she had sent off in the boat with their grandfather Thoas. She has already been led off to death. They draw their swords, rescue her from the retainers, reveal themselves by showing, apparently, the mark of a vine leaf on their bodies ; then make their way to the sea-shore and fly with her to Lemnos. At the end, it would seem, Dionysus appears on a cloud, ordains the

burial of the slain child with great pomp and the worship of him under the name of Archemorus, "Beginner of Death"; his fate is an evil omen to the march of Adrastus.

MELANIPPE.

There were two plays of Euripides called by this name, and afterwards distinguished by the surnames *Melanippe the Wise* and *Melanippe the Prisoner*. The dates are very uncertain, but both seem to be late plays.

(1) *Melanippe the Wise*. Acted before 411, as it is referred to in the Lysistrata of Aristophanes. There was born to King Aeolus and Hippo, the half-divine daughter of the Centaur Cheiron, a dark and marvellously beautiful child, Melanippe. While Aeolus was away from his kingdom, banished for a manslaying, Melanippe was loved by the God Poseidon, and bore him two children, who by the God's command were exposed on a mountain and reared by the wild kine. When Aeolus returned, some shepherds found the babes being suckled by the kine and brought them to the King. He consulted the aged Hellên, or some prophet, who decided that the thing was a portent and must be expiated by burning the two babes. The King summoned his daughter Melanippe, and charged her with the preparations for the children's death. She recognised them, and pled against the prophet, urging that there were no such things as "portents," expounding the order of nature as revealed to her by her half-divine mother :—

"It is not my word, but my mother's word,
How Heaven and Earth were once one form, but stirred

And strove, and dwelt asunder far away:
And then, re-wedding, bore unto the day
And light of life all things that are, the trees,
Flowers, birds and beasts, and them that breathe
the seas,
And mortal Man, each in his kind and law."

Eventually in her despair she suggests that perhaps they are the children of some unhappy girl, who has exposed them through shame. Her pleading is rejected. She goes away and returns clad in black, like the children, avows that they are hers, and demands to die with them. Aeolus in fury has her blinded and flung into a dungeon. The children are given back to the shepherds to cast out again on the mountain. It is not clear how this play ended. The divine Hippo seems to have appeared; but, though she may have saved the children's lives, she can scarcely have given more than a far-off promise of consolation to Melanippe.

(2) *Melanippe the Prisoner.* Produced probably about B.C. 417. The shepherds had not the heart to do the King's command. And it so chanced that Metapontus, King of Icaria in Attica, had recently threatened his wife, Theano, that if she continued childless he would put her away. She obtained Melanippe's children from the shepherds, and passed them as her own. Later on, however, she bore two children herself, and began to hate those that were not her own, the more so because Metapontus specially loved them. Eventually, while the King and the sons of Melanippe were away sacrificing to Artemis, Theano told her secret to her brothers, and induced

them to plot the death of her two foster-sons. They laid an ambush, but when it came to fighting were slain themselves. (A large fragment of the messenger's account of this scene is preserved on a loose sheet of very ancient parchment from Egypt.) The sons of Melanippe, learning through their enemies' taunts some fragment of their story, fled without sheathing their swords to the Boeotian shepherds from whom, as it now seemed, they were sprung. From them they learn the whole truth; they are princes after all, but of another house. They call on the shepherds to follow them, cross the borders to Boeotia, and find their mother languishing and blind in her dungeon; she greets her first deliverer with the words:—

> "O man, canst thou not let the dead lie dead,
> And pass the old spilt tears unharvested?"

They reveal themselves and are setting her free, when the aged tyrant Aeolus arrives to forbid them. They slay him, and carry Melanippe off to the borders again, when they are met by Metapontus seeking vengeance for his wife's brothers and for herself. For she in grief and remorse has taken her own life. At this point Poseidon appears, explains all, commands the ceasing of strife, and restores the sight of Melanippe. He ordains the founding of a sort of pilgrim city—afterwards named Metapontion—in Italy, and the marriage of Melanippe to Metapontus the King. It is perhaps he who gives to the sons of Melanippe their names Aeolus and Boeôtus.

A rather interesting fragment about divine justice seems in style to suit the lips of the wise Melanippe,

though in substance it would come better from the young men in the midst of their vengeance. Some persons, presumably the Chorus, seem to have said that men's sins did not escape eventual punishment, but were all registered in the sky; to whom comes the answer :—

"How think you? Are they separate wingèd things,
The sins of men; and rise each on his wings
Up to the throne, where in a folded book
Some angel writes, that God some day may look
And utter judgment due? Not all God's sky
Were wide enough to hold that registry;
Not God's own eye see clear to deal each sin
Its far-off justice. She is here, within,
Not distant nor hereafter; with each deed
Its judgment fellow-born, would ye but heed.

MELEÂGER.

Acted before 415. Althaea, wife of Oeneus, King of Calydon, when she bore the Prince Meleâger, had seen the Three Fates prophesying in her chamber, and saying that the child's life should waste away as a certain burning brand in the fire was consumed. She sprang up and saved the brand and kept it. Many years afterwards, Oeneus having offended Artemis, the goddess in vengeance sent a monstrous wild boar to waste his land. The Prince Meleâger proclaimed a hunt to slay the boar.

Here the play opens. Many chieftains came to the hunt, and among them the Spartan virgin Atalanta, a huntress and warrior, strong and wise. Meleâger fell in love with the virtue and courage

of Atalanta. His wife, Cleopatra, daughter of Marpessa, seems to have been a weak and timid woman. He talked to his mother about Atalanta. How grand a life to be Atalanta's husband and the father of such children as hers must be! The ordinary life of women corrupts them, and makes it impossible for brave sons to be born, even to men who have led heroic lives :—

"And so I pondered, one life strong and brave,
One weak and low, what issue shall they have?
But two strong souls, how good the fruit should be!
. . . . . .
That too is a possession, manifold
And beautiful, yea, better than fine gold,
Mother. For heavy gold hath wings to fly.
But a good son and true, even though he die,
Is a deep treasure for the house laid up;
A tablet on the walls of life; a cup
That fails not, to the twain that made him live."

Althaea, a passionate and 'natural' woman, is angry, and jealous of Atalanta. There are several fragments stating that the good woman is not she who vies with men, but she who stays within doors and works at the loom. Atalanta herself, who has heard nothing of Meleâger's feelings, is attacked and put on her defence. How can she ever expect to be a good wife? She answers in thoughts exactly like Meleâger's. She craves nobility in life :—

"And should I come to wedlock—which I pray
God send me not!—how should I be as they
Who live dim days in chambers closed apart?
My children shall be higher in their heart!

Surely long days of hardihood, and toil
Well wrought, in man or woman, are the soil
The best fruit springs from."

Presently the hunt sets forth, many of the hunters, especially Althaea's brethren, chafing at a woman's companionship. Atalanta struck the boar first; Meleâger slew it. The head was awarded him as the prize of valour, and he gave it to Atalanta. The two brethren of Althaea, in rage at this, laid an ambush for Atalanta and robbed her of her prize. She cried for aid, instinctively calling to Meleâger, though she did not know he was near. He heard and came to the rescue. The brethren fought, and he slew them both. When the news was brought to Althaea, she, in grief for her brethren and wild jealousy of Atalanta, brought out the fatal brand and cast it into the fire. Meleâger wasted to death. She repented too late, and promised the dying Meleâger various posthumous honours. He answers :—

"Let thy good deeds be done
To them that live. Death maketh every one
The same, Earth and a Shadow. In that stress
The Nothing reeleth back to Nothingness."

Althaea is in mad despair. Some one, perhaps the despised Cleopatra, perhaps Atalanta herself, counsels her to die; how can she bear to live after such deeds? But she cannot rise to the common manliness of facing death. An overpowering cowardice paralyses her. True, her life is blasted; yet—

"Even so
'Tis well in the sunshine. And to lie below,

With dead things, in the dark, will that be well?—
I know the dreams of it are horrible . . .
I am old now; but, oh, with my last breath
I spit it from me! I will not pray for death!"

OENEUS.

An early play, acted before 425. The aged Oeneus, after the death of all his sons, was left friendless and alone in Calydon. His kinsman Agrios ('Savage') and the sons of Agrios drove him from the throne and persecuted him with barbarous jests and insolence. At last the old King fled in disguise and hired himself out as a shepherd at the borders of his kingdom.

Meantime his grandson, Diomêdes, son of Tydeus, has grown in exile up to man's estate, and returns with his friend Sthenelus to Calydon to see his grandfather. The two fall in with a man who had been a servant in the palace. He tells them of the dethronement and persecution of the old King; of the insults of the drunken sons of Agrios. (Euripides may have met with some such story of real life among the uncivilised tribes of Aetolia; there are many such in the East at the present day.) How they brought him into the banquet hall, and

"Cast, as the mirth increased,
Wine dregs and missiles of the tumbled feast
At the old man's head; and when one struck him,
there
Posted was I, to crown the caster's hair,
As cottab-tossers in the game are crowned!"

The passage is quoted by Athenaeus for the purpose of illustrating the game of 'cottabos.' Full of fury, the two friends search for the King. They find him in his shepherd's disguise, and with difficulty break through his mistrust and reserve.

DIOMÊDES.

Where be thy kin? How pinest thou here alone?

OENEUS.

Nay, most be dead. Only the false live on.

. . . . . .

A man might trust his sons; they would not fail
In love. But love that kinsmen bear, turns pale
Beside love of themselves.

Diomêdes names him as Oeneus; the old man thinks he is trapped and seeks to fly, but Diomêdes reveals himself. Here is the son who may be trusted! A rapid plot is made. Diomêdes and Sthenelus gather some men, attack and rout Agrios and his sons, and re-establish Oeneus on his throne. Agrios himself is taken prisoner. Diomêdes, fierce as always, is for taking full revenge and slaying him; but Oeneus, made merciful by suffering, intercedes for his life. Agrios is condemned to exile. He cannot bear his humiliation, and slays himself.

PEIRITHOÜS.

This play, though generally quoted as the work of Euripides, was considered spurious by some Alexandrian scholars, and by some attributed to the "tyrant" Critias. The fragments seem to me not Euripidean,

though it is rather odd that Aristophanes should elaborately parody a scene of Critias without any visible relevancy.

Peirithoüs fell in love with Persephone, the Queen of the Dead, and went to Hades to carry her off. His friend Theseus accompanied him. Peirithoüs was seized and bound, and watched over by a ravening serpent. Theseus, left free, would not forsake his friend, but stayed in Hades :—

> "Fettered, where his comrade fell,
> By Honour's iron chains impalpable."

At last Heracles came to Hades on his expedition to fetch Cerberus. He slew the serpent and begged Pluto to let Peirithoüs free, which Pluto did, being moved by the valour of Heracles and the faithfulness of Theseus.

PÊLEUS.

Acted before 417 and, probably, after 425. The argument of the play is quite uncertain. Peleus was introduced as in exile and poverty, probably his third exile, at the hands of Acastus and his plotting wife. A story in *Dictys Cretensis* (vi. 7), tells how Neoptolemus, being wrecked on Cape Sêpias, found there his grandfather Peleus, living in exile in a cave. They recognised one another, and arranged a plot against Acastus and his sons, inventing a false tale of Neoptolemus' death. In the end Acastus comes to the cave to murder Neoptolemus, and is seized. The old and wise Peleus reproaches him with all his evil deeds, and then forgives him. He, overcome by remorse, gives up the throne to Neoptolemus. Some of these incidents

would suit our fragments, in which, for instance, there seems to be a recognition-scene (fr. 622, 3). But the play is chiefly known for the character of Peleus, a sort of hero-sage, stripped of all the world's goods, and content. It is he, no doubt, who says :—

"Prosperity, I make no count thereof,
A thing God's finger, passing, blotteth off,
Easier than a picture !—But to be
Oneself a thing of Evil ! Verily,
There is no waste of darkness on the face
Of the wide world, no locked and silent place
Under the sod, where one born vile may sit
To hide his nature, nay, nor flee from it.

PHILOCTÊTES.

Acted B.C. 431, with the *Medea*. The play evidently served as a model to the *Philoctêtes* of Sophocles (409 B.C.), and was itself based on that of Aeschylus. Philoctêtes, the comrade of Heracles, and now the inheritor of his bow and arrows, when sailing with the Greeks to Troy, was bitten in the foot on the island of Lemnos by a supernatural snake sent by Hera. The wound was something abnormal, and seemed infectious ('Smell' is the ancient word, but infection is what is meant). Therefore, at the advice of Odysseus, the Greeks left the sick man on the island with his bow and arrows, and sailed away. A shepherd called Actor found and tended him. Nearly ten years after, an oracle declared that victory in the Trojan war would be with those who possessed Philoctêtes and the arrows of Heracles. The

question was how to approach the injured and furious hero.

The Trojans also, unfortunately, know of the oracle, and are sure to make an effort to win Philoctêtes to their side.

Here the play begins. Odysseus appears in disguise upon the island. He and Diomêdes have undertaken the task. Diomêdes is actuated by a boyish thirst for adventure and peril, he himself, as it seems to him now, by some worse folly, some mere senseless ambition or restlessness—he, the man of wisdom!

"And am I then
So wise, who might have dwelt with simple men,
One in the flock, untroubled, gathering
Like joys and fortunes with the subtlest king?
. . . . . .
What is so flown with pride as the weak heart
Of man? It hangs on them that move apart
And do great deeds and suffer; Men of Men,
Names them amid their cities . . ."

The fierce solitary appears; he does not recognise Odysseus, but sees that he is a Greek, and is about to shoot him, when Odysseus saves himself with a ready lie. He represents himself as a friend of the dead Palamêdes, whom Odysseus had destroyed; he is now flying from Odysseus himself. This is the one road to Philoctêtes' sympathy, and the plotter is accepted as a friend. At this moment an embassy of Trojans appears, led by Paris. They beg Philoctêtes' aid, offering him great gifts and dwelling upon his wrongs. The disguised Odysseus is in a difficult position (cf. the *Têlephus*, p. 347). At the

risk of discovery he answers them. True, the Greeks have behaved shamefully, and he hates them; but still an honourable man must not join his country's enemies. Philoctêtes is touched and rejects the Trojans' appeal. If the Greeks have done him wrong, is Paris much better?

"Hadst thou but known to rein
Thine heart, I had been spared long years of pain."

The Trojans depart, and Philoctêtes, worn with emotion, falls into a spasm of his disease. The peasant Actor arrives, and aided by Odysseus, tends the suffering man till he falls asleep. Hereupon Odysseus sends Actor to fetch Diomêdes, and, as soon as he is gone, takes the bow and arrows. When Philoctêtes wakes the bow and arrows are gone, and Diomêdes is there with Actor. Diomêdes, having no weapons to fear, openly announces his mission, and appeals in a long speech to Philoctêtes' patriotism. Nothing is said about Odysseus. Philoctêtes refuses with fury. If he had but his bow, Diomêdes would rue the day he met him! Diomêdes presses him further. Is it right that the bow of Heracles should be wasted here on sea-birds, instead of shining in battle? Philoctêtes half consents to come to Troy on one condition; they must expel from the camp the arch-villain Odysseus. Here the disguised Odysseus, it would seem, in another act of far-reaching insight that seems like folly, reveals himself and hands back the bow and arrows, but begs Philoctêtes before he slays him to listen to his defence. Then, in a greatly admired speech, he coolly lays bare his mind to his raging and puzzled

enemy; blames some of his actions, explains others, shows Philoctêtes what is right, and then, with indifference, bids him slay him if he list! At the end Philoctêtes, bitterly indignant, cannot slay him in cold blood and yet cannot forgive him, when the goddess Athena appears on a cloud and commands a reconciliation.

The prologue of this play is paraphrased entire by Dio Chrysostom, who speaks of the whole tragedy with enthusiasm.

PHRIXUS.

The date is quite uncertain. Athamas, King of Boeotia, having once been loved by the divine Nephele ("Cloud"), took afterwards a mortal wife, Ino. Ino was jealous of Nephele's children, Phrixus and Helle, and made a plot against them. She scorched the seed-corn, so that the harvest failed, and inquiries had to be made of the oracle at Delphi. A bribed servant of her own was sent as envoy.

Here the play begins. The servant has returned with a forged answer demanding that Phrixus shall be sacrificed as a sin-offering for the land. Athamas receives the oracle with dull suffering:—

> "Or again
> If this were but the morning of my pain,
> Had I not voyaged year-long seas of it,
> Belike I should have raged, as the first bit
> Chafes a young colt to rage and strive. But now
> My mouth is hard, and misery stings but slow."

He will not obey the oracle, and decides that it must be kept secret, especially from Phrixus. Ino

professes to aid him in this, for Phrixus' sake and her own :—

"Stepdames' fancies bring no good,
Men say, to children born of other blood ;
I will watch well that none so deem of me."

There are also several fragments describing what a comfort she is, or wishes to be, to her husband, and how she shares all his cares ! She, of course, contrives that Phrixus shall hear of the oracle. He, on hearing it, insists at once that it shall be obeyed. It would be mere baseness to refuse to die for his country ; and, after all, is the sacrifice so great ?

"Who knoweth if this thing that men call Death
Be Life, and our Life dying—who knoweth ?
Save only that all we beneath the Sun
Are sick and suffering ; and those foregone
Not sick, nor touched with evil any more."

All is ready for the young prince's death, when the bribed messenger, moved by his nobleness, confesses all. Athamas in fury hands over Ino and her child Melikertes to Phrixus to slay. The end is not clearly made out. It would seem that Ino, who had been one of the mystic 'Nurses of Dionysus,' calls upon that god for help. He sends a sudden maddening darkness, in which Phrixus and Helle fly frenzied to the forest and Ino escapes. She escapes, however, only to throw herself and her child off a cliff into the sea, while Phrixus and Helle are healed of their madness by Nephele, the long-lost Cloud-mother, and borne away to the land of Colchis on a Flying Ram with a Fleece of Gold. This sequel probably occurs in the prophetic speech of some divine personage, Dionysus or Nephele,

at the end. Possibly there were two different endings, one with Dionysus and one with Nephele, since the Scholiast to Aristophanes speaks of "the second *Phrixus*."

POLYÎDUS.

Acted later than 415. A fanciful folk-tale, which, both by its general construction and by the style and metre of the fragments, would seem to have taken the place of a Satyr play rather than a tragedy.

Polyîdus, the Cretan seer, explains in the prologue his strange plight. Minos's child, Glaucus, has suddenly disappeared, and the King has been seeking for a seer to find him again. He has tried all his prophets by putting a test to them—the interpretation of a certain prodigy that has occurred, a calf which changes colour from white to red and then to black during the day. Polyîdus showed that this referred to the mulberry tree, which passes through the same colours —though what exactly it meant about the mulberry tree we are not told. Minos thereupon said: "You are a true prophet; find my son or I will kill you!"

"The artist and the master hath a yoke
Always more hurting than the common folk,
Set out at gaze in the midst, where all may fling
Blame; 'tis a hard and not a happy thing!"

And these particular circumstances are even worse! The seer has, however, done his best to make ready for his auguries.

"This is the hour. And, ah! What see I there?
A great sea-eagle, wave-worn wanderer,
Shoreward alit.—The child's fate seeks dry land!
Had he drawn seaward, rising from the strand,

This dweller of the waves, that would have said :
'The thing thou seekest in the sea lies dead.'
But now his haunts and food he hath let be
And flown to earth. That is his word to me :
'The billows know not of thy child.'"

Eventually he sees the boy's name-bird, an owl (*Glaux*), sitting on a great jar of honey and driving away the bees. He knows at once that this jar—Greek jars could be as large as the largest cask—holds the body of the child. He has fallen in and been drowned!

The King is pleased, but not satisfied. Polyîdus must now restore the child to life. This, he protests, is utterly beyond his power. A gorgeous funeral is prepared, apparently on the stage. The royal burial-place is opened, and all the boy's dearest possessions are put in it — a superstitious extravagance which Polyîdus condemns. When all is ready, the King bids the guard throw Polyîdus himself into the sepulchre; he can restore the boy to life or else die with him, just as he chooses! He is given a sword, and thrown living into the great tomb.

Eventually he comes out with the boy alive. What has happened is this. As the prophet sat meditating in the tomb he saw a snake come towards the boy's body, and promptly killed it. Presently a female snake appeared, and finding her mate dead, crept out and returned carrying in her mouth an herb, which she laid on the dead snake. The snake came to life. Polyîdus noticed the herb, followed the snake to find where it grew, and brought the boy also to life with it.

It is hard to make out whether the herb grew inside the tomb, or if Polyîdus was able to get out.

It is the seer waiting for his end with resignation who speaks the lines :—

"Who knoweth if to live is but to die
And death life's gate to them that have passed by?"
(Cf. the *Phrixus*.)

STHENEBOEA.

Acted before 423. Stheneboea, wife of Proetus, King of Tiryns, fell in love with the hero Bellerophon of Corinth, who had come to her husband to be purified of an unintentional manslaying. He rejected her love, and she in terror slandered him to her husband, who sent him to Iobates, King of Lycia or Caria, with a sealed letter, bidding Iobates contrive his death. Iobates sent Bellerophon against the fire-breathing Chimaera, but he slew it and returned safe. Iobates eventually recognised his innocence, and showed him Proetus's letter.

The play opens at Tiryns, during Bellerophon's absence. He is believed to be dead; the Queen's mind runs constantly upon him, in remorse and love. One fragment refers to the ancient custom of giving dead and broken things to the spirits of the beloved dead; her nurse speaks :—

"No cruse nor phial falls, but she will see
And between still lips murmur, 'Let it be
For Him that came from Corinth!'"

Once caring little for music or art, now she is full of them :—

> "Love teacheth poesy, and all the lore
> Of songcraft, where no Muse hath dwelt before."

She reproaches herself for caring for one who is probably dead ; who, if alive, hates her :—

> "So rages she at love, and wails alone,
> And that rebukèd Hunger, moan by moan,
> Creeps closer, strangling."

At this point news comes that Bellerophon has returned. He summons the King to speak with him, and Stheneboea is left wondering. How much does he know? Why has he returned? No doubt in order to denounce her. The King comes back and takes counsel with her. She sees at once that she has not been betrayed . . . yet! The King tells her how Bellerophon has seen the letter, and has come in a cold fury to reproach them both for their treachery. The King has begged forgiveness and feigned reconciliation ; but is it safe? Terror has again the upper hand with Stheneboea ; the only thing, it seems to her, is to slay Bellerophon outright. She advises the King to lay an ambush. It may be, though the fragments do not prove it, that she hopes this time to have the chance either to save Bellerophon if he really cares for her, or let him be slain if he hates her. Proetus goes out to gather his men. At this moment Bellerophon appears, asks to see Stheneboea alone, says he loves her, and asks her to fly! She rapturously consents, and warns him of the second

plot against his life. He takes her away; then, having her in his power, tells how he loathes her :—

"Thou Viper of Hell, thou Woman—what were worse
To call thee, or what name more like a curse?"

He carries her off on his winged steed, Pegasus, and flings her into the sea. Her body is afterwards washed up on the shore of Melos. Bellerophon returns for the last time to hurl denunciations upon Proetus and all the human race, and goes away to end his life in desert places.

Stheneboea is, unless my reading errs, one of Euripides's sympathetic sinful heroines, like Phaedra and Medea. The stern righteousness of Bellerophon shades away towards the gloom of melancholy madness in which, according to Homer and Euripides's tragedy, *Bellerophontes*, he died, "eating his own heart, avoiding the footprint of man."

TÊLEPHUS.

Acted B.C. 438. The plot was somewhat as follows: Telephus, son of Heracles and Auge (see p. 321), has become King of Mysia, having been adopted by King Teuthras. The Greeks on the way to Troy, driven out of their course, have landed by mistake in Mysia, and Telephus has defeated them with slaughter, though he himself has been wounded in the left thigh by Achilles with the miraculous spear of Chiron. The Greeks have retired to Aulis, have sacrificed Iphigenia, and owing to the incessant storms

have gone back to Mycenae and almost abandoned the hope of attacking Troy.

Telephus's wound will not heal, and an oracle has told him that "The wounder shall cure." He determines to go to Mycenae, where the Greek chiefs are now assembled, and try to get his enemy Achilles to cure him. Here the play begins. Disguised as a beggar, and lame from his wound, he arrives at Agamemnon's palace and begins playing his dangerous part :—

> "Aye, I must seem a beggar churl, and be
> My very self, the self that none shall see!"

He asks the Queen Clytaemnestra for hospitality, and finds with satisfaction that she hates her husband. It seems that he reveals himself and secures her secrecy. The chiefs are at a council, and will soon return. Agamemnon and Menelaus come first. They are quarrelling over the Trojan expedition, Menelaus reproaching his brother's vacillation, Agamemnon refusing to suffer more for Menelaus' sake. The stranger is presented to them, and explains that he was once in better plight :—

> "Being master of a ship, and put to land
> In Mysia; and there a foeman's hand
> Gave me this gash."

Meantime Odysseus has arrived. He somehow suspects the truth, or at least suspects that the pretended beggar is a spy. He questions him a little; then, as a trap, turns the conversation again to the projected war, and urges Agamemnon to make the expedition not against Troy, but against Mysia—a rich land, and

one to which great vengeance is owing. The chiefs seem inclined to assent. Telephus, in agony for the fate of his country, asks leave, beggar though he is, to speak among the princes :—

> "And take it not in wrath, ye flowers of Greek
> Valiance, that I, a beggared man, should seek
> To ope my lips among great Kings."

He pleads the cause of Mysia and of Telephus. He found the Greeks ravaging his land, and without more question dashed out to repel them :—

> "He wronged us there, ye say.
> Say then what had been right! . . .
> . . . Had ye that day
> Seen what he saw, would ye have borne it thus
> In calm? Well wot I, no! And Telephus
> Shall not strike back as ye have struck withal?
> Have ye no heart, ye Princes?"

This 'unpatriotic' language infuriates every one. Odysseus, now sure of the stranger's identity, denounces him. The Greeks draw their swords to slay him as an enemy and a spy. Telephus springs to the hearth, snatches up the baby Orestes, who is lying there in his cradle, and vows to dash out the child's brains if any one touches him before he has said his say. Then, standing at bay, with his enemies round him, he pleads openly for himself, explaining that he is not a spy and has come only for the healing of his wound. Agamemnon has already given his oath to help him. If they do help him, he will show them the way to Troy; if they slay him the young prince shall be slain too. Clytaemnestra takes his side—professing a mother's

anxiety for the babe, though she seems to have said earlier, "I hate the vile seed of a villain King!" The chiefs are still hesitating when Achilles arrives; he declares he knows no leechcraft, and besides will hear of no compromise with an enemy. The fate of Telephus seems to be sealed, when Calchas the prophet arrives also and announces that it is decreed that Troy cannot be taken without Telephus's help, and that the oracular phrase, "The wounder shall cure," refers not to the man, but to the spear that wounded. A salve is to be compounded of the scrapings of the spear, and Telephus shall be made whole.

The *Telephus*, though rather a melodrama than a tragedy, is in various ways characteristic of Euripides. It represents his great boldness and ingenuity of plot; his swift theatrical effects, such as the snatching up of the baby and the speech afterwards; his vein of rebellious criticism towards established dignities, as shown in the quarrels of the heroes among themselves, the hatred of Clytaemnestra for her husband, the stupid patriotism that resents Telephus's arguments. Our very jejune fragments unfortunately do no justice to the eloquence of Telephus, of which we hear much from other sources. Crates, the cynic philosopher, is said to have been moved to giving up the world by admiration of the heroic beggar in this play.

TÊMENIDAE.

The date is uncertain, but the fragments are late in style.

The basis of the plot is probably the story of Hyrnêtho, daughter of Têmenus, and her brothers, as

told by Pausanias. Têmenus the Heraclid, King of Argos, employed Deïphontes, son of Antimachus, as captain of his men in preference to his own sons, gave him his daughter Hyrnêtho, and made him ruler of Epidaurus. The slighted sons rebelled against Têmenus, and the eldest, Kisus, became king in his stead. "The other sons knew that they could not wound Deïphontes more deeply than by parting him from Hyrnêtho. So Cerynes and Phalces came to Epidaurus; but the youngest brother, Argaeus, disapproved of the plot. Reining up their chariot under the city wall, they sent a herald asking their sister to come and speak with them. When she came they fell to accusing Deïphontes of many things, and besought her earnestly to come back to Argos, promising her among the rest that they would wed her to a far better husband than Deïphontes, lord of a greater following and wealthier lands. Stung by these words, Hyrnêtho spoke up to them. She said Deïphontes was a dear husband to her, and had been a blameless son-in-law to Têmenus; but as for them, they were the murderers of Têmenus rather than his sons! They answered never a word, but laid hold of her, and placing her in the chariot galloped away. Word came to Deïphontes, and he hastened to the rescue; and the Epidaurians joined in the hue and cry. Coming up with the fugitives, Deïphontes shot Cerynes dead, but Phalces clung so tight to Hyrnêtho that Deïphontes feared to shoot lest he should kill her. So he grappled with him and strove to wrench her away. But Phalces held on, and in that iron grip his sister expired, for she was with child. When he saw what he had done to his sister, he drove his chariot furiously away before

the whole country-side should gather upon his track. But Deïphontes and his children took up Hyrnêtho's dead body and bore it to the place that was afterwards called Hyrnêthion. And they made a shrine for her and bestowed honours upon her."—(Pausanias, ii. 28, Frazer's translation, slightly abridged.)

This is a story that obviously represents some Epidaurian ritual, and the extant fragments of the *Têmenidae* do not fit it particularly well; but it seems to be the foundation of the play. Perhaps in the play Têmenus was dead, and the good youngest brother, Argaeus, was killed in battle. This would explain :—

> "War is a hungry God, yet doth not crave
> All things. He loves the bodies of the brave,
> But casts the craven back. So cometh red
> Plague on the land, but good name to the dead."

And Hyrnêtho is perhaps speaking of Cerynes or Phalces in the lines :—

> "A crooked spirit, a churl's door hard set
> Against Love's knocking, nimble to forget
> What true men brood on! Hardly shalt thou find
> In men, though brothers of one kith and kind,
> One true friend to the dead. For coveting
> Is fierce, and duty but a gentle thing;
> And the old magic of the eyes hath sway
> No more, when the live man hath gone his way
> And the house is not."

The words, however, would suit even better a slanderous accusation against Deïphontes, making out that he was in some way false to his kinsman and benefactor, Têmenus.

THESEUS.

Acted before 422. The fragments are few and the plot not clear. Hartung makes out something like the following: Ariadne, daughter of Minos, speaks the prologue, bewailing her father's cruelty, and telling of the tribute of seven youths and maidens annually paid to him by Athens, to be cast into the labyrinth and eventually slain by the Minotaur. A shepherd announces to her the arrival of a ship with a new batch of victims. The ship has a name written upon its prow or sail. He cannot read, but he describes awkwardly, as best he can, the characters :—

"No skill
Have I of letters, but can tell at need
What shapes I saw and signs, that thou may'st read
Their meaning.—First, a perfect round, and through
The heart of it one prick. The second, two
Posts, with one rail midway that held them there
Upright. The third was curled like curling hair.
The fourth, one standing stave, wherefrom there came
Three lying stiff. The fifth was hard to name;
Two separate lines at first, that fell and passed
Into one trunk together. And the last
Was like the third."

It is, of course, the name 'Theseus' (ΘΗΣΕΥΣ). A fragment of a speech of Theseus narrates how he has sailed "to the very hem of Europe's robe" to meet this monster who devours the Athenian youths, and how he has prepared himself for suffering by meditation and training—a celebrated little bit of philosophy. Ariadne is smitten with love for the

heroic stranger, and gives him a clue of thread, by which, if he slays the monster, he will be able to retrace his steps out of the labyrinth. All this he does, and Ariadne prepares to fly with him. At the end Athena appears, doubtless preventing the pursuit and vengeance of Minos, and warning Theseus that Ariadne shall not be his, but must be left on the island of Naxos to become the bride of Dionysus.

It is doubtless in this connection that the interesting lines occur :—

"Another Love there is in human kind,
A thing of honesty, of the pure mind
And true.—Oh, would that Love could only love
Beautiful Spirits and the truth thereof
And mercy ; and leave Her to walk her ways,
God's golden Cypris, without curse or praise!"

APHRODITE ON THE SWAN

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